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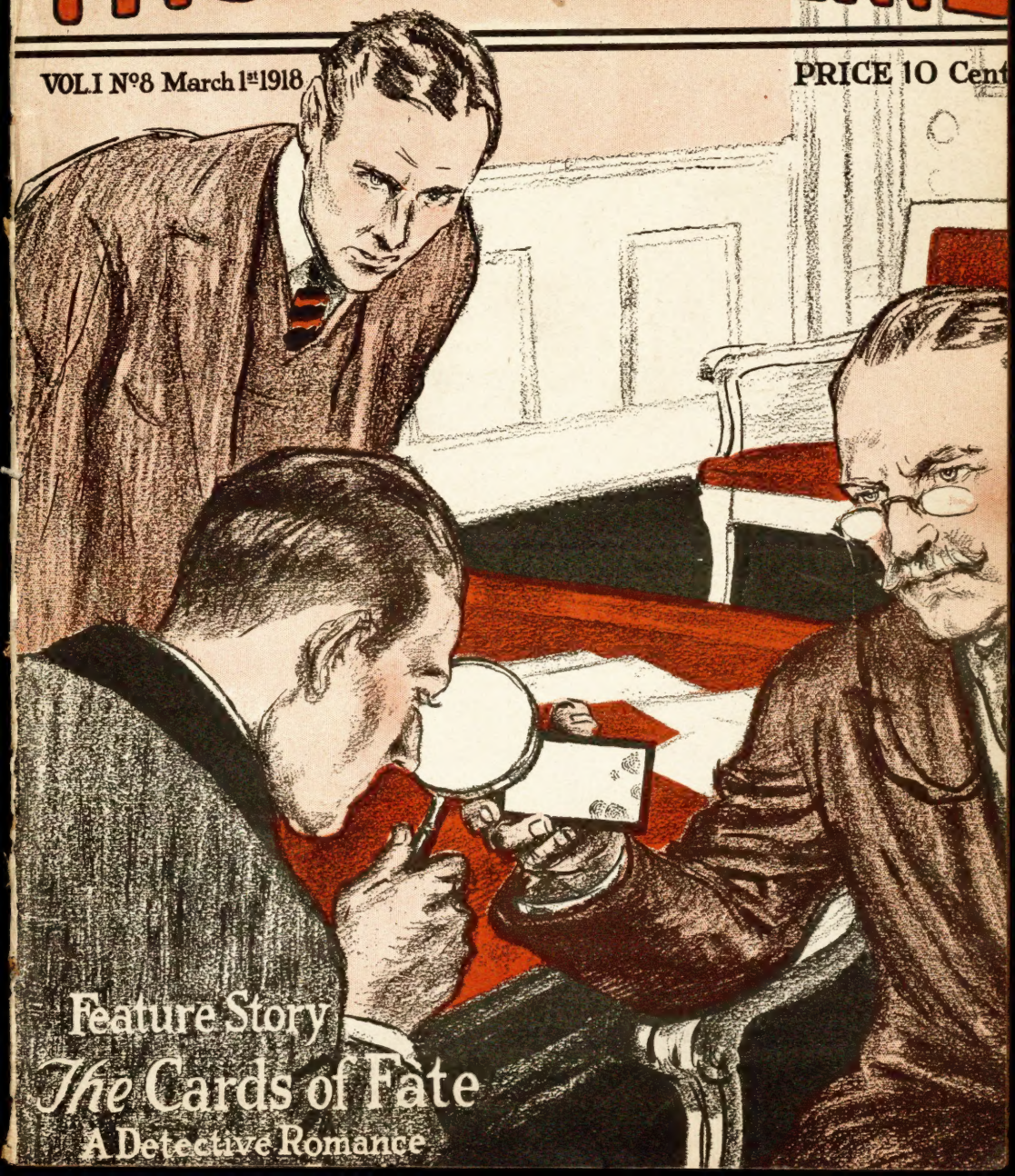

Feature Story

The Cards of Fate

A Detective Romance

"MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS," by William Hamilton Osborne, Out in Our Next

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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The Cards of Fate

AN EXCITING DETECTIVE STORY

By WILLIAM GOODE

CHAPTER ONE

I SHALL never forget a certain Wednesday of the year 1914. I was sitting at the window of my room in the Hotel Cecil, which looked out upon the Thames Embankment.

London, fog-hung for the past week, boasted on this day a clear atmosphere, a mighty relief to me as well as to others, no doubt. I was idly watching the passing river craft—tiny excursion steamers, puffing tugs and clumsy barges. People thronged the promenade, eager to enjoy the sunshine and the clear air. Yes, my interest was only cursory; my mind was elsewhere.

I was in London, not from choice, but by appointment. Four days previous I had arrived from Paris. When I left the Continent, traveling from the French capital to Brussels and sailing from Antwerp, there was no visible suggestion of an approaching cataclysm such as was to stagger humanity. All was placid and serene. I passed through cities where business life hummed as usual, through the fertile fields of northern France and Belgium, where the peasantry pursued their peaceful life, picturesque and pleasant to gaze upon. It was hard to realize that all this was to change so suddenly.

And yet I, Thaddeus Onslow, with but a few others—and these men of power and ranks vastly above my humble station—knew it, and shivered. It had all brought upon me a heavy depression, a ghastly fear which sickened my soul.

The message I received, calling me to London, was in code:

"11204007207608407202O.—WALTON."

Translated easily by applying a common divisor of four to the figures between the ciphers, this giving the number of each letter in the alphabet. Thus: "War sure!"

This was the prearranged order for me to proceed at once to London to join my colleague, Tobias Walton, of the American Secret Service. In Paris I had been practising successful espionage upon certain members of the German espionage service; in other words, spying upon spies, a ticklish and at all times difficult task, as one may well understand, which was certainly a matter of some credit to me, embryo that I was in the profession. This I owed to the great Walton, who reposed greater confidence in me than I actually had in myself.

I had succeeded in gathering some valuable material during my sojourn across the Channel, vibrating between Berlin, Vienna and Paris. I had intercepted two extremely important ukases from Wilhelmstrasse, which furnished complete evidence that the German government was plotting a war of conquest. I had also unearthed data which assured the arrest and detention of a score of spies, who were conducting operations right in the heart of London.

It was quite by chance that Walton and I had been drawn into this sort of thing. After the solution of a mystery case in New York, the robbery of Mrs. Hector Vandeveer's million-dollar pearls had occurred, and this took us to Austria, and thence to Moscow, where we recovered the gems, but did not capture the thief, who shot himself.

Reaching London after that, Walton was called to Scotland Yard to confer with the chief inspector. Though we were both anxious to return to America, Walton finally yielded to the earnest importunities of the British authorities and consented to undertake the solution of one of the deepest mysteries ever known in high government circles. The inspector explained what was required very briefly:

"We are anxious to secure your services, Mr. Walton," he said pleasantly, "primarily because you are an American; another thing, the first act of this mysterious personage, whose identity, personality or sex we do not know, occurred in America. Since then systematic crimes have been laid at the door of the unknown. We are assured of his connection with them because he has always left behind him evidence of his handicraft, quite singularly, in the shape of a common calling-card bordered with black, such as is used by a person in deep mourning."

The inspector took from a drawer of his desk four of these cards. Walton silently took the cards, arched his brows slightly, and observed:

"They are absolutely blank."

"Exactly," assented the inspector. "A pity he was not courteous enough to embellish them with his name, or at least a sample of his handwriting."

Walton studied the cards slowly, one after another.

"He has done better than that," he said dryly.

"Eh?" ejaculated the inspector with surprise.

Walton took from his pocket a very powerful magnifying-glass. He focused it over one of the cards.

"Finger-prints!"

"But," objected the Scotland Yard man, "what can that signify? These cards have been handled by myself and several of my men."

"Have you a man of whose finger-prints you have not a record?"

"No."

"Then," said Walton calmly, "I will be glad if you will search the records to make sure. Please send me a negative of these prints as soon as possible. I will be obliged."

The inspector made a note of the request. "I would like to say further, Mr. Walton," he continued, "that you will have an unusual criminal to deal with, of that I am sure; in fact, I am not wholly convinced myself of his tangibility, not that I am a believer in the occult, but surely the feats this mysterious unknown has performed are little short of the impossible and would seem to call for supernatural powers."

Walton narrowed his eyelids and looked at the inspector a moment. I watched the great American detective with deep interest. His immobile face with its bland, almost child-like, simplicity of expression defied any successful analysis of his thoughts. In the corner of his mouth hung a Pittsburgh stogie, slim as a lead-pencil, unlighted. Walton habitually held one of these in his teeth, but seldom smoked. I was wont to study his moods from its change of angle. At the present moment it drooped, dangling, from which I knew that he was picking up threads with the unerring certainty and cleverness of his craft.

"That is interesting, inspector," he said quietly; "please proceed."

"Our first acquaintance with the 'Spectre,' as our men have learned to call him, was through our Ambassador in Washington. Not more than twelve months ago a tall, thin, cadaverous-looking man called at the Embassy for letters addressed to Herr Julius von Strechler. There were several of these letters, all postmarked Essen, Germany. The Embassy clerk was curious and asked the man why, if he was a German, or receiving German correspondence, he did not have his letters addressed to the German Embassy. Herr Von Strechler, if that is his real name, replied tartly that he was an American citizen and that his correspondent was an Englishman, who preferred to direct his communications to the English Embassy. Of course, that seemed reasonable explanation and no more comment was made. Three times within the week Herr Strechler called for letters; then he disappeared. At the same time it was found that certain secret papers of state, highly important and dangerous, concerning correspondence between England and America, were missing from the Ambassador's private file in the Embassy safe."

The inspector paused. I was interested, fascinated to intensity. Walton's placid face never changed, nor did a muscle twitch. His only act was to clasp and unclasp his fingers.

"You can easily see the seriousness of this happening," resumed the inspector. "This secret correspondence, if made public, would have beyond doubt precipitated a certain and horrible crisis and possible war with a third European government, the name of which I need hardly mention; and not only my country, but yours would have been put in a prejudicial light. You can imagine what followed. The cables were hot between our two countries for days. Every government man was on his toes, seeking the recovery of those papers. They were recovered; but"—the inspector paused, and Walton nodded with comprehension—"it required a million dollars in gold and no questions asked. The most daring case of blackmail ever perpetrated upon two powerful governments the world has ever known. It had to be done; the ignominy of defeat at the hands of a clever crook was nothing to the risk of a frightful world war with its consequent carnage and costs."

"Quite right," assented Walton.

"Of course," pursued the inspector, "in the interest, I may say, of the world at large, this adroit rascal and his confederates, if he has any, must be run to earth. There is no telling what moment he may break out in some new deviltry. A man clever enough to abstract secret papers from a safe of which only two men are supposed to know the combination, and which is so well guarded as that at the Embassy, may well be feared. I need not hint that there will be a large reward paid by both your government and mine for his apprehension."

Walton nodded slowly. "You then suspect this Von Strechler?"

"I do."

"On what grounds?"

The inspector took up one of the black-bordered cards. "This card was found in the file-case from which the papers were taken. One of the Embassy clerks, observing Von Strechler open a Berlin postmarked letter, caught sight of several of these cards in the envelope he was holding. The connection is plain."

"I see," assented Walton; "the members of the Embassy staff——"

"We were compelled to exonerate every one of them. The only person having the combination number of the Ambassador's compartment in the safe was Thomas Partlow, his trusted secretary, a veteran of British wars, wearer of the Victoria Cross, and who could be only unthinkable as a traitor to his country."

"That eliminates me," said Walton, as if to himself; "yet

the papers were taken from the safe. Human agency did that, or——"

"There is the question," broke in the inspector. "Of course, this man Von Strechler gained possession of the papers, but that he could have personally taken them from the safe seems incredible. I am not a strong believer in the supernatural."

"Of course, the conveyance of a million dollars in gold is no light transaction," interrupted Walton; "there must have been corporeal agency in that."

"You will be surprised to know that the money was called for at the Subtreasury, in New York, by a woman or girl, as her slight figure seemed to indicate, deeply veiled. She arrived and departed in a taxicab. The agreement having been made, no attempt was made to follow her, or learn her identity."

Walton extended his arms over his head and yawned. The inspector gazed at him in astonishment; he misinterpreted the act as signifying lack of interest.

"I trust that you attach proper importance to this matter," he said testily.

"All that is its due," replied Walton in his calm manner, something which I always admired in the man, that wonderful power of self-command which I knew I myself lacked. At the moment I was so excited that I tingled all over. Walton, however, was as unconcerned as the old negro woman about her soul, to have us use an ancient simile.

Thus he dealt with two great and powerful governments with the same equanimity that he would have accorded a mere case of simple highway robbery; but I knew, what the inspector was unable to perceive, that not a shred of important detail had been overlooked by the detective, and that, if he had not already grasped a solution of the mystery, he had formed a theory.

"This is only one and the first of several affairs in which this mysterious unknown has figured," pursued the inspector. "The crimes have ranged from robbery and blackmail to murder."

"Oh!" said Walton with a long, deep breath, and he repeated thoughtfully, "Murder!"

"Yes, the victim was Sir Wilfrid Launcefal, peer of the realm and a large owner in the Kimberly Mines, Limited. Sir Wilfrid left Cape Town some months ago with five large diamonds concealed in a belt about his body. Not one of them weighed less than eight carats. When the ship reached Southampton, an agent of the De Beers was at the dock to meet him, but he did not appear. His stateroom was searched, and for four days police agents searched the ship. It was almost accepted as a belief that he had fallen overboard unobserved, though there was an ugly rumor that he had left the ship in disguise, when a stoker shifting coal in the bunkers found his battered remains, almost unrecognizable. The treasure-belt about his body was found, but the diamonds were missing, and in their place was inserted one of these black-bordered cards."

The inspector's voice lowered almost to a tremolo key as he held up the card, which to me looked as grim and sinister as any object I had ever seen. I shivered, but Walton was as unmoved as ever. However, I detected a slight metallic note in his voice as he asked:

"This thin, cadaverous man, whom you call the Spectre, was there a passenger of his description on board the steamer when it left Cape Town?"

"Our men made careful inquiry and examined closely the passenger-list, even tracing every passenger, but not a bit of evidence was found to connect one of them with the affair."

"And Sir Wilfrid had no companion, no person with whom he associated on that voyage?"

The inspector pursed his lips. "I investigated the matter personally. There was a young woman—very beautiful, it was said—who seemed to be under his care, but she left the ship at Gibraltar. Her name appeared on the passenger-list as Miss Genevieve Burnson, daughter of the United States consul at an obscure point in Algiers, named El Kadir. There seemed no reason to connect her with the crime, even if it had been possible for a woman to have accomplished such a crime and to have concealed the body in the coal-bunker afterwards. We were forced to eliminate her."

"So," said Walton slowly, and now his figure grew rigid and his face hardened. "Always the woman! Always she is beautiful and gentle and tender and innocent. The woman at the Subtreasury, and now the woman on the ship."

"Surely!" exploded the inspector; but Walton held up his hand.

"I know Jim Burnson, consul at El Kadir. He belongs in my home town in the Middle West. He has no daughter, and is a bachelor."

The inspector's jaw dropped; he sat back, staring at Walton. "It cannot be that—that she is connected with it," he said almost raucously. "It is believed that Sir Wilfrid was seen on deck after the ship had left Gibraltar."

Walton smiled coldly, and I knew what that smile meant.

The conference lasted but a few moments longer. When Walton and I plunged into the yellow London fog to make our way slowly back to our lodgings, he did not speak for some time. I was careful not to break in upon his ruminations. Not until we had reached the door did he speak.

"Onslow," he said, "I hate to touch that case. It savors of the inexplicable, the unknown. I never liked the intangible; there is nothing but air to grasp. Science alone can grapple with that kind of mystery, and I am only a mechanic. Do you understand?"

"I have confidence in your ability," I said with no thought of flattery.

He laughed. "You dear Onslow," he said. "I believe I like you better every day. The die is cast, however. The paper of state, the gold, the diamonds, mystery, the woman—plenty of material, Onslow. Of course, you know that old proverb, truth is stranger than fiction. Very pat, I am sure, but let me tell you, there are some things in this great cosmos in which we exist that are stranger than truth. Do you understand what I am saying? Stranger than truth."

"Stranger than truth," I repeated.

"You have it," said Walton, striking a match and lighting his stogie, for only the second time I had ever seen him perform that act, "that is what we are up against, Onslow. Ignis fatuus, blue lights, the smell of the tomb, footfalls in the dark, unseen fingers, intangible things—and though we have picked this charming mélange up in England, we must go to America to solve it. *Voila!* as the French say. Let me lean on your sturdy shoulder up these steps; I feel weak to-night. Now, you wouldn't believe it, would you, Onslow? But I am the most nervous man in the world."

I could see that he was approaching one of his rare garrulous moods. I was careful to humor it, and he babbled on for many minutes after we were in our chambers. Suddenly he stopped and said concisely:

"You are to go to Paris on that espionage work, Onslow. Stay there and work—work until I send for you. You will receive this cipher message." He wrote out the cipher code and the key. "Immediately upon receipt of this, come back, provided I learn that war is possible. Otherwise I will advise you. When you come back to London take a room at the Cecil. Register as John Dunmore. I shall need you then, and I know that you will not fail."

With which he walked out of the room and did not come back. I waited all night for his return. Swallowed up in London, it was of no use for me to seek him. I at once obeyed his instructions and went to Paris the next day.

And now, in obedience to his command, here I was back in London and sitting in my room at the Cecil. It is easy to understand that I was anxious and eager to know what developments had occurred during my absence. Four long, interminable days I had waited. I was still waiting. Where was Walton?

CHAPTER TWO

I WOULD gladly have left my room to join the throng on the Embankment for a stroll. I felt the irksomeness of confinement and the need of exercise. I dared not go out, though, for Walton might come at any moment.

For a while I sat at the window and then arose and paced the floor. Fortunately, I could ring at any moment for refreshments, and I observed now that the thoughtful omnibus who had brought my last brandy-and-soda had left a copy of the *Times* on the tray. I picked up the paper and glanced at its news columns.

Germany and Russia were mobilizing troops. There was no doubt that France would be involved as Russia's ally, but no one as yet dreamed that England would cast her lot into the armed ring; at least, there was no such intimation or hint in the news items of the *Times*.

My eyes wandered idly over the items until they encountered the personal column. It was a fad of mine to read and study these personals. They always fascinated me, even as a puzzle picture claim's one's interest. Suddenly I gave a little start and readjusted my glasses. There it was in black and white:

"J.D.—480200808020072.—W."

Forty-eight divided by four was twelve, and the twelfth letter of the alphabet was L. I quickly read the cipher. One-fourth of twenty was five, that being the E. In a moment I had it—"Letter."

J. D. was John Dunmore, the name by which I was registered at the Cecil. W was, of course, Walton, and there was a letter for me doubtless at that moment below-stairs. I lost no time, but ran down to the mail-clerk, who promptly handed me the missive, a plain white envelope with the name of John Dunmore legibly written upon it. I broke the seal:

"DEAR ONNIE"—he often addressed me by this abbreviation of my name—"strange things have came to light since I sent you to Paris. Incidentally I wish to bestow praise upon you for your able work there. Now, curious, is it not, that great governments have paid a million in gold for those missing papers, without once having thought of the antiquated bunco game of the gold brick. That is just what they bought. They got the original papers back, of course, but the clever and versatile artist called the Spectre worked the trigger both ways and killed two birds with the same bullet. A transcript of those papers was sold to secret agents of Germany for an enormous sum. Picture what that will mean. If England does not declare war on Germany now, Germany will declare war on her. The pot is boiling and our own dear Yankeeland, so averse to entanglements of a foreign sort, is apt to be drawn in the stew also. Pretty tough, eh? You and I may have to shoulder a gun yet to save our democracy from the wolves of German autocracy. They are after us, and if we don't get them they will get us. However, our work for the present is of the round-up order, and the Spectre is our game. I have full knowledge that his next strike is in the United States, and I have booked passage for us both on the *Volturnia*, sailing Thursday from Liverpool. I shall not see you until we meet aboard the steamer. Go down to Liverpool Thursday morning and go quietly on board. You are booked as John Dunmore and will find me in Stateroom 236. We will be strangers. Oh, by the way, beware the woman who wears a pheasant wing on her hat. You are so impressionable, Onnie, hence the warning. Fearing that you might not think to call for a letter under your alias, I am inserting a personal in the *Times*, knowing your penchant for that column. WALTON."

I read this astounding epistle several times and carefully weighed each sentence. My respect for Walton, hitherto sufficiently enormous, was fast merging into awe.

I was never more deeply impressed with his superlative genius than at this moment.

I remembered that I was but a cub reporter on a New York daily, young and unsophisticated as a fellow not long from his *alma mater* is apt to be, when I first met him. Knowing his aversion to members of my profession, it was perhaps odd that he should have taken me up with such kindness and friendly interest. Possibly this was due to the fact that I had never betrayed his confidence through the press and had always respected his adjurations never to mention his name in print. Too many overzealous young scribes, in their desire to color an exciting story, make the mistake of betraying a friend. Knowing my heart's desire to adopt the detective profession myself, he was kind and tactful enough not to discourage me, though never actually giving me strict encouragement.

Thus, day by day, the detective, his personality, his methods and his odd characteristics became an engrossing study for me—a study so complex, so fascinating as to admit of no such thing as abandonment. I never tired of being with him, despite his silent, puzzling ways, never wearied of his companionship, for I was constantly discovering new phases. One day I would be convinced that he staked his success wholly upon psychic powers, only the next day to be certain that he employed nothing but the simplest of materialistic reasoning—and there you are.

I was ready to follow him to the end of time, and sacrificed my reportorial position gleefully to become his assistant.

One sentence in Walton's letter particularly impressed me as well as puzzled me: "Beware the woman who wears a pheasant wing on her hat." I pondered over this. Was it likely that I would meet a woman who wore a pheasant wing on her hat? And if so, why should I avoid her? Oh, well, mystery was piling upon mystery so rapidly that I could only resign myself to the awaiting of events without presupposition. I would certainly heed the great detective's warning.

This was Wednesday, and, as I was not to leave for Liverpool until the next morning, I had plenty of time for preparation. I welcomed the opportunity for a little exercise in the open air, so I donned my hat and went out. A short distance up the Embankment promenade was a steamer-landing. Scores of people were passing and repassing this point. A small river steamer was landing its freight of excursionists. I idly watched them disembark, and was thus engaged when a little feminine scream sounded in my rear and a light touch fell upon my arm.

"Oh, sir, will you not protect me? That man has followed me all the way along the Strand and keeps insulting me."

I turned instantly and caught my breath a little sharply. Trembling and a trifle pale, there stood before me a type of young girl more transcendently beautiful, more delicate and refined, I thought, than any I had ever seen before in my life. I was for a moment enchained in contemplation of her, and might have remained so but for her evident distress and the figure of a leering, brutish man of the lower class, who hovered a few yards away. In an instant I sprang toward him.

"What do you mean?" I cried angrily. "Be off, before I hand you over to the police!"

The fellow hesitated and measured me coolly as if he thought of trying conclusions. However, he reconsidered, and, with a wicked oath, receded rapidly. I turned to be rewarded with a most radiant smile, which fairly dazzled me.

"Oh, I thank you, sir; I was so frightened!"

"Did you ever see him before?" I asked.

"No, no!" she answered in a voice as musical as a silver bell; "he followed me all along the Strand. I felt that I must ask protection."

"Certainly," I said, conscious of a species of delight such as I had never felt before in a female presence. "Pray, how can I serve you further?"

"I would be glad if you would call a cab. I think I had better not venture to walk home."

"I think that is a good plan," I agreed, and signaled a passing taxi. I opened the cab-door for her to step lightly inside, and was about to close it when I remembered that she had not given her destination.

"Where?" I asked.

"Oh, I—the Clarendon," she stammered. "Papa and I are stopping there at present. He will be grateful to you. We are American, you know, and not very familiar with London."

My heart bounded. Her eyes met mine with a candor and such a simplicity of expression as to convince me.

"I am American myself," I said, "though I am long familiar with this great city."

"Oh," and she clapped her hands after the manner of a delighted little child, "how perfectly lovely! Then I am going to insist that you accompany me and meet my father. We have just been dying to meet some one from our own land."

She slipped back in the cab, making room for me in such an artless and natural way that I felt inclined to accept. My natural diffidence caused me to hesitate and I must have blushed. The next moment I overcame this. I could not be a boor; surely, there was little that was conventional in the proposition, and it seemed so natural. People traveling in foreign lands stand little on convention when they meet others from their own country.

So I stepped into the cab beside her. I am going to admit that I did it eagerly, too. I had never before been so deeply impressed, and the blood was rioting hotly through my veins.

That dash through the crowded London streets to the Clarendon was something like a paradisiacal dream. I was enchanted with my charming companion, her marvelous beauty, her ready wit, her gentle, high-bred manner. She prattled child-like of her home in America, of her school life—she was just from the seminary—and of the immediate prospect of a return to the United States.

"We sail to-morrow," she said frankly. "I don't like Europe. I long for my own land. I want to go back to Montana."

"Oh, then your home is in Montana?" I asked.

"Yes; papa owns great mines there. He is all for gold, you know. Everything he knows about is gold. I call him a gold maniac. But wait till you see him."

"Gold is a powerful agent," I said, and added, *sotto voce*, "for good or for evil."

I thought she indulged in a little shiver and seemed to draw away from me; but when I looked at her sharply there was no change in her earnest young countenance.

We drew up at the Clarendon; I sprang out and helped her to alight. Not until this moment had I concentrated my attention upon much more of her lovely person than her face. I had merely noticed that she wore a charming dress of some clinging material. Now, however, as she bent her head in alighting I glanced fully at her hat.

The blood went bounding to my brain in hot surges. For an instant I staggered, dizzy and weak-kneed. The hat was a sort of turban, but adhering to its crown was the wing of a cock pheasant.

Ordinarily, of course, this would not have impressed me at all, but—Walton's warning in his letter. I felt a cold chill creeping through my veins.

"Have—have I been too forward?" she asked falteringly, placing a soft hand on my arm. "You know I only thought of how nice it would be to meet some one from America. Nice for me and for papa."

I looked deep into her wonderful eyes as one looks into a fathomless well. She did not avoid my glance and I saw nothing, absolutely nothing, but purity and sincerity and truth. I took a great hold on myself.

"Coincidence, that is all," I decided mentally; "there are probably thousands of pheasant wings on ladies' hats in London."

And I put the matter aside and followed her into the hotel. I could not have resisted, even if I had known that she was otherwise than what I believed her to be.

I waited in the reception-room for her return. When she did appear there was plain disappointment in her eyes.

"Papa is at the Peers Club," she said. "It is something about a government loan. Oh, dear! I would so like to have you meet him."

"It would be a great pleasure to me," I replied with a low bow; "there may be another opportunity, I trust," and then an astonishing recollection came to me.

We had traveled several miles in a taxi, had exchanged much pleasant talk and some light confidences, and yet each knew not the other's name. I fumbled in my pocket for a card, but she came quite close, with the pleading of a little child.

"I cannot let your great service go unrequited. I beg the honor of your presence at lunch with me. It is quite all right," she laughed melodiously. "I am one of the American girls, you know, and have all their privileges; besides, it is a very public room."

I must have blushed to my hair roots and tried to stammer an acknowledgment, but she only laughed again that merry little laugh and caught my arm. In a few moments we were seated at a table well hidden among palms and I suddenly discovered that my charming hostess, despite her youth, knew the value of champagnes and choice viands. It was a delightful hour that I spent, and I would have been content to have had it go on forever. We talked earnestly and freely, as if we had known each other always. I knew that I was drifting to an intimacy that I, usually shy in the presence of the opposite sex, could not and would not resist. Our spirits seemed so thoroughly in accord that nothing else seemed worth while. I forgot everything—my duties, Walton, the portents of the times, and—— Well, it may seem impossible and absurd that such a thing could be, and all in so brief an acquaintance. I felt that I had met for the first time in my life the one girl, my predestined fate, and I felt that she knew it also.

From one subject to another we drifted, always our impulses seeming to flow together, until finally I found myself holding one of her little hands over the table and the hot blood seething in my veins.

"And you leave London to-morrow?" I asked.

"To-morrow," she whispered, and I saw that her thoughts were the same as mine. Curiously, I had forgotten that I was also taking leave on the morrow.

"The world is large," I went on, "but it is not so boundless but that I shall hope to see you again."

My words were a question and I hung upon the answer like one who is waiting to learn whether he is to live or die.

And then I observed her draw back a little and her face change. There was a step behind me and a form loomed at my elbow. Something like the jangling of a discordant bell sounded in my brain and I turned my head to see the waiter obsequiously bowing. He placed a small slip of paper on the table and drew away.

I glanced at it. It was as if a dark cloud had shut down over my head. I could not take my eyes from the inscription upon the slip until I had translated it:

"24060060048.—W."

One-fourth of twenty-four was six. The sixth letter of the alphabet was F. One-fourth of sixty was fifteen, and that was the letter O. In an instant I read it—"Fool!"

I seized my head with both hands and in fierce revolt against this cruel warning raised my eyes to look at her.

What I saw held me petrified.

The chair opposite was empty.

CHAPTER THREE

I SPRANG to my feet and dashed through the palms to grasp the startled waiter by the shoulders. "The girl who was with me—where is she?" I hissed. "I want the truth. Where did she go?"

Fright showed in the waiter's face, and he broke away and placed a table between us. "Ah, m'sieur"—he was French—"I know not. *Mon Dieu!* the *petite fil*—she was there. I have not seen her."

His face showed that he was telling the truth. I hurried through the various aisles of the place, guests at the tables staring at me until I reached the street. The fresh

air striking my face brought me back to my senses and I recovered in a measure my self-possession.

And then I experienced a shock. A man descended the steps before me and stepped into a cab. He was tall and indescribably gaunt. His face was cadaverous and death-like in its pallor. His monstrous great dark, expressionless eyes for a moment transfixed me, as it seemed to me, balefully, hatefully, and then the cab-door slammed and he was whirled away.

Petrified, I could only stand and stare and shiver and utter, with a sudden recollection of a description given by the Scotland Yard man:

"The Spectre!"

There was not the least doubt in my mind that he was the mysterious criminal, he with his strange psychic personality, who had swindled two great governments, betrayed their trust, and was perhaps one of the factors of a mighty world's war. He, the man known as Herr Julius von Strechler, had passed within arm's length of me, and I, like a fool, had stood actionless and watched him escape. With a mighty effort I shook off the spell which had seemed to paralyze my whole being and made an effort to pursue the cab.

A powerful grasp on my shoulder detained me and a jeering laugh sounded in my ears: "Ring off, Onnie, old boy! Come back to earth; you've been dreaming."

I turned and faced Walton. For a moment I was dumb. My first sense was of shame and simple mortification, but it was promptly succeeded by blind, insensate anger. I threw off his hold.

"Don't place your hands on me!"

We faced each other. There was only mild, tolerant amusement in his eyes. The inevitable stogie was at an upward angle in his mouth; his slouch hat was thrown back from his brow. Slowly I felt the power of his personality and my rage gradually ebbed. We eyed each other for some seconds.

"It's all right, Onnie, old boy," he said soothingly; "I had to do it. Let's say no more about it."

I felt a curious revolt, together with a bit of self-contempt at having yielded to a siren's spell—for it must be true, I reasoned—though against my will. With an effort to put it all away, I burst out:

"Toby, did you see him—the——" My tongue clacked dryly in my mouth.

"Who?" he asked patiently.

"Why, The Spectre!"

"Of course," admitted the detective with exasperating sangfroid. "What of it?"

"Why, isn't he wanted?"

"The fruit is not ripe for plucking yet," he said dogmatically. "Come, Onslow, you're not quite yourself yet. Walk a way with me and get the air; I have some instructions for you."

We walked on until we came to a little park. I was now quite calm again, though a victim of some misgivings. We paused and yielded up a couple of pennies to the caretaker for a bench. Walton was calm and silent for some time. I was in no mood to open the discussion.

"Surely, Onnie," he said, looking at me from the corner of his eye, "there are stranger things than truth. We have only reached the rim of the whirlpool. In a little while we will be swirling within it toward the vortex. The devil's tail is in the cauldron. I wish we hadn't taken the job."

He yawned wearily and I stared at him aghast. I recalled that strange, baleful gaze of The Spectre. It was as if the Dark Angel of Death himself had glared at me.

"Walton," I gulped, "if—if she is bad, if she is an impostor, then the devil went to heaven to borrow an angel's disguise."

"Onslow," he said, "you are to sail on the *Volturnia* tomorrow. When you arrive in New York wait for word from me at the Ritz Hotel. Do nothing till you hear from me."

"You——" I began, astounded.

"It is imperative that I remain in London for the present," he answered, "and I need not urge that you beware the female with the pheasant wing in her hat."

He burst into uproarious laughter and slapped his knee as if it was a great joke. My face flushed with anger.

"I am not sure that I will take commands from you," I flashed angrily.

He instantly ceased laughing and threw an arm caressingly over my shoulder. "Onslow, you know I like you; hence my zeal for your welfare, hence also my faith in your fidelity. There are three objective points for you at present—the *Volturnia*, the Ritz Hotel in New York, a message from me as soon as possible."

With that he turned and walked away. I did not follow or call after him. I was in a rebellious mood and strolled aimlessly about the park for a while; but I knew that I should obey his commands. Eventually I made my way back to the Cecil and prepared.

In my room I sat down and tried to calm myself. I believed that my greatest need at that moment was concentration, so I procured a pack of cards and essayed a game of solitaire. Departing from the usual rule of the game, though, I began to make mathematical figures with the cards. I tried to work out a problem that was searing my brain.

In love with a girl whom I had seen only once, with whom I had spent a scant two hours, whose identity, whose origin, name or connections I knew nothing of. Then a recollection came to me—I did not know her name nor where I was ever again to find her.

A thought cheered me, however. Walton knew. At least, I felt sure that he did, and if she was connected with The Spectre, or any of the mysterious international blackmailing gang it was likely that I would see her again.

Moreover, I was puzzled. Why had she invited me to accompany her, unless for the purpose she had stated—that I was also an American and she and her father would be glad in a foreign land to meet a countryman of their own? It had seemed logical and sincere. If she was sincere, if she was innocent, how explain her sudden disappearance? Had she seen Walton? Did she fear him? Or, I thought of The Spectre. He had certainly been in the restaurant, or at least in the hotel at the same time.

Vainly I tried to map it all out in a sane, cold-blooded way. There had been a beautiful young girl connected with the mysterious murder of Sir Wilfrid Launcefal on the Cape Town steamer. There had been a veiled woman in the international blackmailing case. To her had been delivered the million dollars in gold at the New York Subtreasury. The bags containing the coin had been placed in her cab and she had driven away with them. was she—this charming, innocent girl, just from school—the same?

I rang the bell and ordered absinthe. The cordial strengthened my nerves a little and I tried to convince myself that I was an idiot. I put the thing out of my mind and began to methodically pack my effects. I must get the first morning train to Liverpool.

Before I had half finished, I dropped my effects and yielded once more to the problem.

And so the evening passed, until I glanced at the clock and saw that it was nearly ten. An uncontrollable impulse seized me to go out upon the street.

The streets of London at night are more quiet than those of New York. There is no White Way, no such night life. I was surprised, therefore, to come upon a great throng gathered before the bulletin of a newspaper, just posted.

There was no clamor, no undue excitement, only a sort of grim resolution in the face of every Englishman in that crowd. I read the bulletin with comprehension.

"England sends her ultimatum to Germany, denying the right to invade Belgium. War is possible."

I cannot say that I was surprised, for Walton's code message had prepared me. Germany would defy England, I felt sure.

Great events were impending, and I was leaving for America the next day. I would be out of touch with them.

and something like rebellion arose in me. Walton would stay, and I must go. An uncontrollable desire seized me, until I remembered what she had said to me. She was going back to America also. Her home was in Montana. Her father was a mining king. A great bounding sense of joy seized me and I sped back to the Cecil and finished packing my effects.

CHAPTER FOUR

I AROSE early, paid my score at the hotel and took the early train for Liverpool.

At the Ritz Hotel in New York I was to await a message. Nothing more definite than this.

To the ordinary mind this might have seemed simple enough and sufficient; but of late I had begun to feel a certain, perhaps foolish, resentment against Walton's attitude toward me as savoring somewhat of the patronizing. He never confided even his slightest theories. I must be satisfied with accepting orders as a mere subordinate. There was never an exchange of opinions, or a request of a theory of my own. It was as if I might not be capable of advancing such, and it chafed my pride.

Such is the way of youth, with its optimism and opinion of self. I could not understand that the deep trust he placed in me, the absolute importance of the trust, should have been sufficient without cavil on my part.

So I was in somewhat of an irritable mood as I clambered into my compartments. So absorbed was I in my reflections that we were out of London and speeding across the beautiful English country before I took notice of two men who occupied the compartment.

They sat in the opposite corners, facing each other, and leaned forward with their heads close together, in low-toned converse. I only glanced at them casually at first, but when one of them suddenly sat up with a clear, sharp exclamation, I was attracted.

"Well, do as you please, Smithson. You can be sure of one thing—when Benton Langhorne sets out to get a thing he gets it. You can sell or fight; suit yourself. I have offered you a round sum. Take it or leave it, but don't forget one thing—if you don't take it you will get nothing."

He put much stress on the last word and as my gaze took him in clearly I was suddenly interested, perhaps more in his peculiar and striking personality than in his words.

A large man, yet not powerful in his largeness, for a certain obesity forbade this, he would have claimed attention of a curious sort anywhere. He wore a suit of some kind of snuff-colored material, of a weave the like of which I had never seen before. A wide-brimmed hat of yellow felt shaded his face, which was heavy in jowl, triple-chinned and of an odd saffron hue. What struck me most forcibly was this synchronism of color—yellow—even the whites of his eyes partaking of that livid tinge.

Upon two fingers of each hand were great yellow bands of virgin gold. In his necktie was a glittering gold nugget. Even the tie itself had gold threads in it and the waistcoat was of gold brocade. I blinked and looked again at this extraordinary personage, who instantly suggested to me opulence and egotism well suited to his character, despite its bizarre effect, which, however, he seemed well fitted to carry—a veritable man of gold.

His companion was of the opposite type. Lean and lank, he had deep-set eyes, dark and smouldering with many hidden lights—a man who might have been mistaken for a member of the clergy, so plain and strict was his dress and his gravity of manner. Two greater contratypes I had never seen; yet, he conveyed a sense of power, just as did the other, though of a different kind.

"What do you mean?" I cried angrily; "be off, before I hand you over to the police."

It is needless to say that my whole attention was claimed by two fellow travelers. I did not need to watch them covertly, for they seemed unaware of my presence. The lean man, Smithson, as the other had called him—opened his mouth with a sort of soundless, contemptuous laugh.

"Your offer does not tempt me in the least, Langhorne; neither does your implied threat scare me. I own Santa Lucia; I staked that claim myself and my title cannot be assailed. You have carried your shaft seventy feet beneath my best vein. You have tapped it and taken out millions in ore. I have ten times the amount of gold you offer me in plain sight. I want the value of dollar for dollar for that which you have taken from my claim. I will settle for no less; three millions or nothing."

I was thrilled. Two men of untold wealth were locked in a fierce grapple for mastery before my eyes. This bandying of terms in millions, with the same unconcern and coolness that a poor merchant would bandy with a rival in mere hundreds, was exciting to say the least. I waited with bated breath the reply.

Langhorne's hand stole to his waistcoat-pocket and he took out a magnificent gold chronometer. "Sixty seconds to accept that million, Smithson, or nothing. Remember, I know your circumstances well. Your company is overcapitalized twenty million dollars. To meet your dividends next month you have got to have a million. You haven't

got it. Your pay-roll is two months overdue. You have been six months tunneling to that vein, and you've got two months more work before you reach it and get a profitable pan. Your stockholders aren't going to wait. They can't be hung up on mere promises. Four of your directors are on my side. What are you going to do? Twenty seconds have already elapsed."

Smithson turned as pale as chalk. He sat back a little and I could see him gulp as if for breath. His deep-set, smouldering eyes blazed hatred and defiance at his rival.

I held my breath with intense excitement.

Smithson's fingers worked convulsively. I had a sudden chilly fear of his purpose, but it was unfounded. Slowly his color came back and he forced a cold smile. "Three millions or nothing. There is justice in the courts."

Langhorne clicked his watch shut and thrust it back into his pocket with a dry laugh. "Time is up," he said coolly; "you've made the mistake of your life, Smithson. The courts, eh? Try it! You ought by this time to know the power of gold."

"I suppose you expect to break me as you have broken others?"

"Oh, no; not so bad as that. See here, I am not that kind. I'm going to make you a generous offer."

"You'll excuse my distrust."

"Don't be a fool, Smithson. We'll patch this up. I've no ax to grind nor no feeling against you. We will pool our interests. Our properties are contiguous. I'll admit our best vein is pretty well worked out. Yours is promising. We'll take over your stock, allow you dollar for dollar on our books and you shall be president of the new company. Now, what could be better than that?"

Smithson looked hard at the other. "And you would, of course, hold the control?"

"Why not?"

The lean man laughed scornfully. "Now, I have one to spring on you, Langhorne. I didn't come to England for fun. I haven't been in a cathedral since I have been here. What you said just now about my mine and about the dividends is correct, absolutely so. When you said that those dividends would not be paid you made a mistaken statement."

Langhorne opened his yellow eyes a trifle. "Eh? What do you mean?"

"The dividends will be paid. The expenses of the mine will be settled in full as soon as I reach Montana."

"Are you bluffing, Smithson?"

"You ought to know me better than that."

Langhorne's three chins seemed to swell abnormally above his collar. He narrowed his eyes and studied his rival for some seconds; then he nodded slowly. "You scorn my offer. I think I understand. You have secured foreign capital?"

Smithson inclined his head. "You see, I am fortified," he said coldly. "I have a clear case against the Red Rock Mining Company. You have undermined my claim. Three million dollars paid to me when we arrive in New York will square the account."

"And if it is not paid?"

"It will be paid."

Langhorne sat back, and, placing his hand to his mouth, yawned. "We'll talk this over during the voyage," he said. "If I am not mistaken you are booked on the *Volturnia* also?"

"I am."

"All right. You'll excuse me, but at the next stop my daughter will join me."

Smithson arose silently and took a seat opposite me. He at once busied himself with a newspaper, not even once glancing at me.

For myself, I had been intensely interested. Of course, I did not for a moment dream that the affairs of these two financiers were to become in any way entangled with my own. It afforded me fresh interest to know that they were to be fellow passengers on the *Volturnia*.

I settled back on the cushions and fell to studying the rushing landscape. It was some moments before a startling thought, bred of recollection, came to me. These men were American mining kings and their mines were in Montana. The mysterious girl whom I had protected from a ruffian on the Thames Embankment, and with whom I had lunched at the Clarendon—the girl of whom Walton had warned me—had told me that her father was a mining king and that his interests were in Montana. Something of a coincidence. Could it be more than that?

I glanced from one to the other. Could it be—my veins tingled—that it was by the *Volturnia* that she was returning to America, by the same steamer as myself? Then I could have cudgeled myself for my obtuseness. Why had not the possibility occurred to me before? Certainly, I had been stupid.

There was at least three other steamers sailing for America this same day. The *Volturnia* was a slow boat, and the passage was cheaper. Possibly this was why it had not occurred to me that she might book passage by this slower boat. The faster steamers had the preference of most tourists.

It is unnecessary to state that I found myself tingling with interest, mingled with feverish anticipation. The Man of Gold, as I mentally christened him, had said that his daughter was to join him at the next stop of the train. Could it be that this unscrupulous mercenary was her father? Finally the jerk of the air-brakes was felt and we slowed down at the platform of a way station.

Langhorne, aroused from a deep reverie, peered out of the window. I could see a hustling, bustling throng of people no more. It was an interminable length of time until the guard unlocked the door and thrust his head into the compartment. "Mr. Benton Langhorne," he intoned monotonously, "a message, sir."

The big man thrust a coin into his hand and took the envelope handed him. I saw that it was superscribed in a delicate feminine hand and got a whiff of its dainty perfume. Langhorne opened it leisurely and glanced at the letter.

It was evidently brief, for he very quickly turned and gazed out of the window. Then he yawned and turned to Smithson, saying to him precisely the right thing to ease my curiosity. "My daughter Arline has gone ahead to Liverpool and will meet me at the steamer. I would like you to meet her, Smithson."

"Thanks," said the other curtly.

"Arline!" The name dinned in my brain and aroused a wild flood of conjectures.

Up to this moment the great millionaire Langhorne had not seemed even aware of my presence. Now he fixed a steady, keen gaze upon me, and, leaning forward, asked politely: "Excuse me, but is not your name Dunmore?"

For a moment I was breathless and unable to answer; my jaw dropped and I felt a curious sense of the uncanny. How had this man, whom I had never seen before in my life, become possessed of my alias? I pulled myself together with a mighty effort and forced myself to answer, "It is."

"I thought so," with something like a little gesture of triumph. "I seldom fail in verifying a description."

"Is that how you came to recognize me?" I asked, somewhat dazed.

"It is the truth, and now I have the opportunity to acknowledge a great debt I owe you and which I hope you will permit me to repay. My daughter has told me of the protection you gave her and I am deeply conscious of the obligation."

It all swept over me like a great wave and for a moment I was so thrilled with delight at this unexpected turn of events and the verification of my hopeful suspicions as well that I quite overlooked a certain incongruity of circumstances which I was to realize later.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALL the rest of the way to Liverpool, Langhorne chatted with me in the most frank and cordial manner. I found him, in spite of his apparent vulgarity of appearance, a man possessed of rare intelligence and all the parts of a gentleman.

He expressed in most tactful manner his appreciation of the service I had done his daughter and his regret at not having been at the Clarendon to meet me at the time. He extended me the heartiest kind of an invitation to spend a month at his ranch in Montana.

"Arline will be delighted to know that you are to be a fellow voyager with us," he said spontaneously. "I am not going to flatter you by telling you her real opinion of you."

I was overwhelmed with the glorious anticipation which all this created and lived in a state of absolute bliss and forgetfulness until we landed in Liverpool.

By this time, I am quite sure, you are awake to some of my weaknesses and can understand why Tobias Walton was not disposed to leave matters to me wholly, or to depend upon my initiative.

"Too impressionable, Onnie," was his kind criticism. I learned to realize how true this was, though we are, most of us, ever blind to our faults until they are brought home to us in some forcible way.

I parted with Langhorne at the station. As I left him I saw Smithson standing a few yards away, looking at me curiously.

And that was what brought me back to earth and my senses with a great bump. The very first practical realization dawned upon me when I remembered Walton.

I stopped perfectly still and began to tremble. Slowly I went over it all—the great detective's warning, the girl with the pheasant wing on her hat, her mysterious leave-taking of me at the table, the apparent connection of The Spectre with it all, and now I had committed myself in more than one way to this extraordinary individual who called himself Langhorne and posed as a multimillionaire.

I was quite in a disturbed frame of mind when I got aboard the steamer. I went at once to my stateroom and sat down to think. The more I pondered, the more perplexed I became and also the more disgusted and angry with myself for my lack of foresight.

Truly, I was in a puzzling position. Just what attitude I was to assume at this point of affairs I was at a loss even to guess. Why had not Walton given me more explicit instructions, or at least explanations or some kind of a tip? Why had he remained in London?

The Spectre! Why, yes, of course, that was why. He was the real criminal beyond a doubt. The cunning Herr Von Strechler, who held the black-bordered cards of fate, indexes to many mysterious tragedies, was the high game. These others were mere subordinates, with whom Walton evidently believed I was sufficiently astute to deal. Walton was after The Spectre.

I trembled a little when I thought of meeting Arline. Would I weaken under her spell? I set my nerve against it. I was a detective, with serious work before me; for, if Benton Langhorne was really her father and he was associated with Von Strechler, as it seemed likely, then it would be madness in me to yield to what seemed to me like love, but might be mere infatuation.

So, for the first day of the voyage I kept under cover, so to speak. When I ventured into the dining-hall I sought a table in a remote corner. I was edified to see Langhorne and Arline with Smithson at the captain's table. She, more beautiful than a dream and charming in her vivacity, was at the captain's right, a place of honor.

That evening, closely muffled, I patrolled the deck. Through the windows I caught sight of her in the main salon. The temptation was powerful to walk in and make my presence known, but I conquered it. Suddenly there was a footstep behind me, and a voice said quietly:

"I beg pardon, are you not the young man who occupied the same compartment with me from London to Liverpool?"

I was face to face with the man Smithson. I had never spoken with him, and that he should address me now was not altogether strange, as we were fellow passengers. I had not associated him in any way with crooks, so had no hesitation in accepting his overtures.

"My name is Dunmore," I said; "I am glad to know you."

"I presume you heard my name, Joseph Smithson, of Ore City, Montana? I am sure also you overheard my conversation with that gilded shark, Langhorne, who is at present in the cardroom, losing some of his wealth at poker."

"I must admit that is true," I said.

"Would you mind going aft with me? Let us go where it is quiet. I would like to have a talk with you. I've got to talk with some one and you appear to me to be an honest young man."

"Certainly," I assented, and we sought an unfrequented part of the afterdeck. We exchanged cigars and he began:

"It is not necessary for me to rehearse the situation between myself and Langhorne. You undoubtedly heard it."

"I could not very well help it," I confessed.

"Of course; now you can understand my position. While I am financially relieved and can easily defy Langhorne in that way, I am still aware of the fact that I am personally in deadly peril. This may surprise you."

I gave a start and glanced at him. He met my gaze steadily; his deep-set eyes, with their smouldering light, did not once waver. "It does surprise me," I began; but he went on:

"I am not a coward, as those who know me can tell. Death holds no terror for me ordinarily, yet I am in somewhat of a funk over a mysterious sensation, which I cannot dispel. Don't think I've been drinking, or that I am crazy." Before I could comment, he pursued: "The fact is, I can feel distinctly some unknown but unseeable presence constantly at my shoulder. If I step into a dark place the sensation is horrible and my flesh creeps. It seems as if I was about to be stricken down to death by an invisible hand. Is it not strange?"

"Strange, indeed," I agreed; "of course, it must be due to some weakness of your nervous system."

"I don't know; I prefer to think it is. Still, I have a horror of the unknown and the unseen. Now, I am a practical matter-of-fact fellow and not given to superstition or moonshine. Yet, believe me, I do not think I shall leave this ship alive."

From a professional point of view I was interested; he was undoubtedly sane and sincere. "Upon what do you base such fears?" I asked.

"Upon little more than premonition."

"Ah," said I, "do you think you have enemies aboard?"

"The only person on this ship besides you that I know anything about at all is Langhorne."

"You do not fear him?"

"Not personally; he is only a tub of soft flesh. But I have reason to believe that if anything happened to me he would be cognizant of it."

I perceived his significance. "I see," I breathed, and a creepy sense of something I could not understand came over me. "This is all very strange. You ought to conduct yourself with great care."

"I intend to do so; that is one reason why I confided in you. I am sure you are honest and to be trusted."

"I certainly will not abuse your trust."

"I am sure of that, so sure that I am going to ask a favor of you. My stateroom is next to yours. I want you to co-operate with me in watching for any attempt to enter my stateroom at night. If it is entered unknown to me it will mean my certain death."

"What you tell me is startling. Do you think it is as bad as that?" I asked, with every nerve on the *qui vive*.

"I assure you that I do."

"And Langhorne?"

"I am going to tell you about Langhorne," said Smithson slowly and with emphasis. "His pose, as you no doubt have noted, is that of a man of millions, made ostensibly in gold-mining."

"Ostensibly," I repeated; "you qualify the assumption."

"It is my theory; I have no facts to base it upon; still, I am disposed to accept it. He seems to have unlimited means. Langhorne owns, or claims to own, a property next to mine. I know that he has worked his mine in a desultory sort of way for five years. I have never seen much ore taken out until he ran his gallery under my vein of ore, and then he took out three millions—and out of my

vein. That is the quarrel between us. You heard the rest of it. I am going to institute suit against him for its recovery. I have secured English capital to back me. He did not know that, and thought he had me on the hip. Now that he knows he cannot freeze me out, I realize my personal danger."

Again that old creepiness came over me, and I instinctively glanced over my shoulder. Smithson saw it and nodded.

"That is the feeling I have," he said. "Do you know I am convinced that Langhorne is not a normal human being? Something about him suggests an idea which you may deem absurd. You, of course, know that fanciful tale of Doctor Faust, who sold his soul to the devil. Well, as I stand here this moment, I believe that Langhorne is the devil's own instrument. I believe that the devil owns him, body and soul. Why do I believe that?" Smithson cleared his throat. "In every case that I have known of Langhorne's quarreling with another, that other has been found the victim of a mysterious ending. In no case yet has there been the slightest evidence to connect Langhorne with the mysterious deaths in a criminal way; yet in every case they have been persons who have stood in his way or incurred his enmity."

"You—you know that about him?" I whispered.

"I do, Mr. Dunmore. I believe that is your name?"

"Yes," I said.

Some prescience of a nameless horror oppressed me, some strange intuition of an approaching tragedy. I thought of the mysterious cards of fate; the same deadly power was back of this, I verily believed.

"Mr. Smithson," I said at length, "we are strangers. I, however, believe you an honest man, and I share your fears that you may be in danger. Certainly, there is mystery in all this and I will do all I can to assist you."

I would not commit myself to more. Certainly, I would not reveal my identity to him; yet, I was formulating a theory of my own. "I do not believe," I continued, "that Langhorne is alone in this thing. If he is what you assume, then I am sure he has colleagues."

"It may be so, though I have never seen evidence of that."

"He has a beautiful daughter."

"Ah, yes; and I have heard that she is sweetness and purity itself."

"Perhaps," I ventured, "now that we have this understanding, it may be wise for us not to be seen together much."

"Quite right," he assented; "I thank you for your kind interest in the affair. By the way, if anything should happen to me, I will ask you to do me a favor"—he took an envelope from his pocket—"please deliver this letter to the address written upon it. I will trust you, you see."

I took the letter and he grasped my hand with a warm pressure and was about to walk away, when he started with a smothered oath as a man's figure suddenly arose from the shadows almost at our feet.

I recoiled and instinctively felt for my pistol-pocket. For an instant not a word was spoken, but the man who had so suddenly made his presence known and whom I now saw must have been reclining in a steamer-chair just in the shadow of a lifeboat, held up his arms, stretching and yawning.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, have I interrupted you? Your voices woke me up."

For a moment neither Smithson nor I spoke. Each seemed to be waiting for the other; but the man turned and began folding up his chair. We had not noted his presence there, so near us.

"We are sorry to have disturbed you, sir," said Smithson, apparently recovering himself. "My friend and I have been rehearsing a little scene in a drama we are constructing. Consequently any violent terms which you may have overheard need not alarm you."

"Oh, that's it," said the stranger, with apparent lack of interest. "Sorry I did not wake up soonor to hear it. I don't like this Scotch mist. It is bad for my asthma. Good-night, gentlemen."

He shuffled away, and, just as he passed under the port-side light, I saw his profile. He wore a Vandyke beard and looked a type of Parisian; yet, he used perfect English. He passed into the cabin and then I felt Smithson's hand on my arm. "I don't like that," he said. "How much do you suppose he heard?"

"I am inclined to believe that he was asleep, as he claims," said I.

"Well," said Smithson with a deep breath, though I saw that he was not convinced, "let us hope that is the case. Good-night."

He slipped away and I stood a moment reflective by the rail. A heavy mist was rolling in, and I decided that I would go into the cabin. There was a determination uppermost in my mind that before the *Volturnia* docked in New York I would pick up the tangled threads of these mysterious events, or I would forever renounce my ambition to become a detective.

CHAPTER SIX

At table the next evening I sat opposite the man whom Smithson and I had reason to believe had overheard our conversation. I took careful note of him and at once discarded any fears that I might have had, even though he had indeed overheard us.

He was a distinguished-looking person, with a sharp Vandyke beard of distinctly French type; his manner was quiet and reserved, and he seemed to have no acquaintances on board. I went so far as to inquire of the purser about him, and learned that he was Monsieur Jules Frochard and that he was from Lyons.

We were now two days out and I had occasionally kept in the background, so that I had not as yet run across Langhorne. Of course, I saw Smithson frequently and he often slipped into my stateroom unobserved. He was still a victim of morbid fears.

Langhorne was to be found at almost any time in the cardroom. He was an inveterate gambler. I peered in a number of times and each time noted that at the table, with him and others, was a tall man, with a heavy black beard and a complexion almost as swarthy as a Hindu's. I was interested enough to inquire of a steward who he was, and was told that his name was Dmitri Vassilovitch and that he was reputed as an attaché of the Russian Embassy at Washington. He seemed to have as pronounced a liking for cards as Langhorne.

I saw Arline at a distance, and, with the greatest effort at self-control, avoided meeting her. Once, when I saw her sitting alone on the main deck, with a sort of forlorn expression upon her lovely face, I almost broke my resolution. The impulse to present myself to her was overpowering. I knew, however, that under the circumstances I must simply remain in the background—watch and wait.

It would be probably five days yet— the *Volturnia* being ordinarily a seven-day boat—before we would reach New York. I was somewhat undecided what to do when I should arrive there. If I obeyed Walton's orders and went to the Ritz, I would lose sight of Langhorne. Somehow it was difficult for me to associate him or his beautiful daughter with The Spectre and the international blackmailing gang.

I had come to the conclusion that Smithson's fears might be groundless and that he was the victim of a morbid depression of spirits. I knew of no one but Langhorne on board the steamer who could have any possible motive for doing him physical harm. Just how Langhorne, languidly afflicted with obesity, could do this was not quite clear. I did not believe it possible.

So my resolution to pick up any tangled threads of mystery on board the *Volturnia* seemed unlikely to bear fruit in the absence of material. Now that all was settled in the regular routine of the voyage, my former presentiments seemed to be rapidly dissolving like mist. Only Smithson's attitude gave me any concern. He was still morbidly fearsome.

I did not forget, however, the old axiom that still water runs deep and that a calm sea may often be the forerunner of a tornado. I had stubbornly determined to pursue my present course of cautious waiting, when I fell upon the first of a series of startling developments.

I kept to my stateroom pretty much during the day. The third evening out, however, I went out on the afterdeck, which seemed quite deserted. I was watching the phosphorescent sea rolling in the ship's wake, when a step behind caused me to turn. A heavy hand fell on my shoulder.

"Saints and sinners! Is that you, Dunmore? I was sure that you had missed the boat. Where on earth have you kept yourself all the while?"

I stared into the yellow-tinged orbs of Benton Langhorne. He was smiling in the greatest of good humor and seemed delighted that he had found me. His heavy sides shook with an excess of good nature.

"I—I have kept to my stateroom for various reasons," I stammered.

"Oh, *mal de mer*, as the French call it. Well, I hope you've overcome it enough by this time to become one of us. We've been having some lively set-tos over the green cloth. Say, lad, I never was so lucky in my life. I've cleaned up Prince Vassilovitch, that lanky Russian, and last night I took on that Frenchman, M'sieur Frochard. Say, he's a devil, do you know it? Knows the American game to the limit. Plays the joker free, like we do in the West, but I got him in the end. Only a few hundred, but I got him. Ha, ha! No game like the old American stud. You ought to join us, boy."

"I am not a card-player," I said earnestly; "I am not a gambler."

"Gambler!" he snapped. "Neither am I, I don't play with that spirit. Sport, that's it. If it's gambling, then life is a gamble. Anyhow, I want you to show Arline a little attention. The poor girl is quite without it. Come, she is in the cabin now, and I want to give her evidence of the gratitude I owe you."

His manner was so bluff, so kindly, and his whole purpose so evidently artless as to make refusal impossible. Then the blood went leaping through my veins like fire. It was the hardest moment I had ever known in my life. Against my better judgment and all my resolutions I felt myself weakening.

He pulled me toward the cabin-door. "I know you're shy," he laughed; "but I'm not going to take a refusal."

I went. We passed into the cabin. Arline was sitting just under a lamp, reading. Other passengers were scattered about the cabin.

"Arline," called Langhorne merrily, "here he is. I've found him. Now we shall have an opportunity to repay his kindness to you."

She arose and turned. I knew that my cheeks burned like fire and my eyes must have betrayed my eagerness. Then I went cold. It was as if I had suddenly stepped under an icy shower.

For, in a place of the pleasant greeting which I expected and believed I had a right to expect, to my startled surprise, I received only a blank, cold stare. Her face was a trifle pale, but completely immobile, while she gazed at me with evident surprise and wholly without recognition.

"My daughter, this is Mr. Dunmore," said Langhorne genially. "I find him all that you told me he was." He stopped short and stared at her also; she shot a questioning glance at him.

"I do not understand," she said; "this gentleman I have never seen before."

"What?" exclaimed Langhorne, while his face changed and he shot a quick, penetrating glance at me. "You have never seen him before? Do you mean that you do not recognize him?"

"That is just what I mean," and she continued to look at me with the same blank expression.

I could not speak or even move, but continued to look straight at her like one dazed.

"Of course, I am pleased to meet any friend of yours, father," she said with cold civility. "Mr. Dunmore, did you say his name was? You see, it is quite plain that there is a misunderstanding. I never learned the name of the young man who so gallantly protected me on that occasion."

I had not given her my name. How then had Langhorne known it? I grew giddy with the recollection that he had given me the impression on the train that he had learned my name from his daughter.

"Why, that is very strange," said Langhorne stiffly, turning to me. "Did you not assure me, sir, that it was you who rescued my daughter from a ruffian's insults on the Thames Embankment?"

There was almost a menace in his tone and his manner as he faced me. I looked silently at Arline, as if to receive a cue. Her gaze was cold, and conveyed nothing. What could it mean?

Why should she deny me thus? Surely, there could be no mistake. Were there two girls of her type who had suffered the same experience that day on the Thames Embankment? Impossible! Yet, I looked at her in vain for some slight sign of recognition, some clue to her action. She merely regarded me with a cold, blank stare.

Then I found my voice. "It seems that there must be some mistake," I stammered. "It is perhaps my fault; some sort of a coincidence, possibly. If I am in error, I hasten to apologize."

Then she smiled coldly and inclined her head. How beautiful she was, I thought! "That it is a mistake is evident," she said.

"Oh," spoke up Langhorne with a deep breath and fixing an ironical gaze upon me, "it is plain that we are not under obligations to you, after all, Mr. Dunmore."

I flushed hotly with a sudden sense of insult. Like a flash it came to me that I was being made the butt of a cruel, contemptuous and malicious snub. Certainly, she was the same girl, and just as certainly she knew me. Walton was right. My conception had been wrong from the first. I was humiliated, angry, though more at myself than at her. I had made a fool of myself, but what was worse, she had made a fool of me. Langhorne had cunningly placed me in the rôle of an impostor.

They both bowed curtly now and moved away. I could only stand fool-like and stare after them. The impulse was upon me to go after them and express my opinion. That, I saw, would be only making myself more of a fool than ever, and I had been a fool—yes, a consummate fool.

There was no longer any doubt in my mind as to the true character of both of them. The grave question, in my mind, now was as to how much they knew about me and if they were aware of, or suspected, my real identity.

With inward rage at myself, I went back to the deck and paced up and down furiously in the darkness. How I had made a mess of things! Perhaps I had wrecked Walton's game. How much better if I had simply played the astute shadow and kept in the background.

I was puzzled, mystified. Some mysterious game was afoot and I had not the slightest inkling of what it was. I was convinced, though, that Walton knew.

Walton had sent me back to America, but had not told me why he was sending me. His simple instruction was to proceed directly to the Ritz Hotel and there await word from him. That was certainly explicit enough. There was nothing else to do. Perhaps I would find a message there that would explain all; at least, I hoped so.

The only warning he had given me I now repeated mechanically:

"Beware the woman with the pheasant wing on her hat."

After a while I decided to go back to my stateroom. I had been within but a few moments when there was a gentle rat-tat on the door. I knew who it was, and admitted Smithson.

"I've been waiting for you to come back, Dunmore," he said, and I saw that he was quite pale. "Let us have a talk. Have one of my cigars."

I declined, but sat down opposite him and decanted a little brandy and tossed it off. I expected the usual disquisition from him concerning his personal fears, but, to

my surprise, he took up a different subject. Before he had uttered a dozen words I was interested.

"Dunmore," he said, "I have been keeping an eye on that Frenchman, whom you remember was on deck last night while we were talking. I have formed a singular conclusion regarding him."

"Oh," I said, "Monsieur Frochard?"

"That is the name by which he is known to those on board."

"Really," I exclaimed, "have you any reason for thinking that it is not his real name?"

"I have."

"You surprise me."

Smithson cast a little apprehensive glance over his shoulder, as if fearful of being overheard. He lowered his voice almost to a whisper:

"There are a number of queer people aboard this boat. Did you take notice of that tall Russian?"

"Prince Vassilovitch?"

"Yes," and Smithson narrowed his eyes a little; "well, I have learned some things about him and Frochard. They are in cahoots, to my best belief."

"What do you mean?" I was startled.

The big miner looked around again fearfully. "Before I explain my meaning, permit me to make a little statement of conditions, which are likely to affect not only the whole of Europe, but our dear country particularly." I could hardly hear him, so softly did he continue. "A great war is certain. England will surely become embroiled. Europe will be the theater of terrible events within the next month. I know from the best of information that Germany is ready, that she is eager, and *Der Tag*, the German favorite toast, is at hand and every German is chafing to undertake the great German dream—the conquest of the world."

I was astounded. "Impossible!" I exclaimed. "I know something of the German people. They are by nature peaceable and averse to conquest."

"The Kaiser is the arbiter."

He sat back and looked steadily at me. I was, I must admit, skeptical. "Well, in what manner can a European war affect our country, save perhaps to unsettle trade conditions?"

Smithson knotted his fingers. "Before it is finished we shall be the most deeply affected of any."

"Pardon me, if I express my doubts."

"Very well; of course, you know we have the Monroe Doctrine."

"Certainly."

"Ever since its promulgation, that doctrine has been odious to the German. He hates it, as he hates every free institution. He hates the English, who are our kin, and he hates us."

"Oh, I am afraid that is a broad statement."

"Well, let us see. The moment war is under way, the first thing that will happen will be the sweeping of German commerce from the seas. England will, and can, attend to that. England, France and Russia are unprepared. They will have to have supplies, they must have munitions. They will come to us; we shall sell to them. Our commerce will be wholly with them, for it will be impossible to deal with Germany. The German hatred of us will be intensified. They will demand that we create an embargo, demanding it on the score of neutrality."

"International law does not forbid commerce between neutral and warring nations."

"That will not be considered. You must understand the German mind. Their principle is, first and last, that anything and everything is justifiable that contributes to self-interest and the gaining of their cause. Now, Germany has the most powerful espionage system on earth." I knew that well from my experience in Paris. "I think you begin to understand me now."

"Quite to the contrary, I am more puzzled than ever," I declared. "What has all this to do with Monsieur Frochard or the Prince Vassilovitch?"

"A great deal," he whispered. "For God's dear sake, Dunmore, keep your counsel and do not impart to any one what I am about to tell you. In America there is a league, the watchword of which is '*Vaterland und Gott.*' Half a million German-born citizens owe allegiance to it. They act in perfect harmony. You will see what will happen. No public institution, no factory, no town or city, no public official, but will be under the ban of this secret league. The inciting of riots, the destruction of public works, internal dissensions, seditious propaganda, all these things will be fomented."

Smithson paused a moment to take breath. I was stunned, horrified, incredulous. "Impossible," I said; "our German citizens are among our most staid and loyal people. Most of them have come to America to escape this very militarism which threatens the peace of Europe. Naturally, they would be loyal to the country of their adoption."

"Ah, I fear, as I said before, that you do not understand the German mind. It is true the German-American is naturally loyal to America against any other nation in the world but *Das Vaterland*. A German is a German; he has a German mind, and that is all that can be said about it. Of course, some Germans will remain loyal to the country of their adoption."

"But Frochard is a Frenchman and Vassilovitch is a Russian."

"Both are adventurers."

"Then you mean——"

"Yes; just what you were going to say. They are spies in the pay of the German government."

For many seconds I sat staring at the form of the big miner.

"I overheard a confidential conversation between them. They have papers in their possession, which, if they were to fall into the hands of the American Secret Service, would be of inestimable value. Now, Dunmore, it is our duty on our arrival in New York to see that these men are placed in the hands of the authorities. I hope you share my opinion."

I was startled, thrilled. I could not doubt Smithson's sincerity. "If all this is true, it is very important," I said. "I agree with you absolutely."

I knew that Smithson did not suspect that I was myself a Secret Service agent. At last I was getting hold of something tangible.

"I am glad," said the big miner; "we will act accordingly."

"Just a moment," I interposed; "have you observed that Langhorne seems quite well acquainted with these two men?"

Smithson placed a hand on my knee. "Langhorne is a German by birth," he said. "Need more be said at present about it?"

At last I could see something at which to grasp. I began to realize what the nature of the game was that Walton was playing. Deeper than any ordinary matter of robbery or blackmail. The mystery seemed to be clearing up somewhat.

Just as I had reached this conclusion, something, which was to me like a thunderbolt crashing out of a clear sky, occurred. Smithson placed a hand in his pocket. "Here is something which puzzled me," he said with his Western drawl; "when I entered my stateroom an hour ago I found that I had apparently had a caller, who left his card under the door. The singular thing about it is that he neglected to write his name on the card. What can you make of it?"

And he extended to me a white card, of the ordinary calling type, perfectly blank, but with a grim black border to its edges. For a moment a terrible dark mist seemed to shut down over my vision. I recovered to find that Smithson had opened the port to admit air and was gazing anxiously at me.

"Are you ill?" he asked.

"Let me see the card," I asked, reaching for it. There was no doubt about it, I saw, as I examined it. It was one of the mysterious cards of fate, and I had no alternative but to accept it as a death-warning to the man who stood before me.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I STARED at Smithson. The straightforward, honest type of Westerner, to whom guile and deceit were absolutely foreign, was marked for death. It was devilish, and my whole being rose against it.

He was looking earnestly at me.

"What significance do you attach to it?" he asked me after a slight pause.

"Smithson, you are in danger."

"Oh, well," he said quietly, "I have been perfectly aware of that for a long time. But the card—what does it signify?"

"Death!"

He came over from the port and sat down, looking at me steadily. "Then you have seen the card before?"

"I have seen others like it; each one has been the unerring symbol of a tragedy."

He was very calm. Fear did not show in his clear-cut, open face. "I suppose I must accept it," he said.

"No; you must defeat it," I answered, "and I am going to help you."

"I have believed from the first that you are my friend."

I saw no reason for longer concealment. I unbuttoned my waistcoat and displayed my badge. He opened his eyes in wonder. "The Secret Service," he said in a hushed voice. "I never suspected it. Then you are really shadowing these people?"

"To tell the truth, no," I said, and told him all. He listened.

"Dunmore," he said, "I am not a detective, but I am a strong man and not altogether a fool. I am at your service. Can we not work together?"

"By all means," I assented. "I am anxious that you should not be out of my sight, at least as little as possible. It is for your safety. The blow may not be struck at you on board this ship, perhaps not even in New York, maybe not until you reach Montana. But you are in peril."

"But the card—what does it signify?" "Death!"

I saw him set his jaw. "I felt it all along," he said grimly. "I am on the defensive. I shall place myself subject to your commands."

"Very good," I agreed; "then I advise that we be seen together as much as possible. I want to reach New York without any serious event occurring. My mentor, Tobias Walton, will communicate with me there. I have faith in him. He never fails."

"This is a very singular situation, Dunmore. It is easy enough to see why I am to be put out of the way. Langhorne wants to get possession of my mine."

"Doubtless."

"But these crimes of which you have told me, in which the cards of fate figured, this murder of Lord Launcefal on the Cape Town steamer, this robbery of the English Embassy—do you think Langhorne implicated in them?"

"I do not know what to think," I answered; "the master mind in the conspiracy is, of course, that abnormal personage, Herr Von Strechler, known as The Spectre."

"Pretty deep stuff, Dunmore."

"Yes; it is."

He whistled softly. I was glad to see that it had not got his nerve. "I am glad you take it so coolly," I said.

"Oh, well, that is because I am now face to face with something tangible," he replied; "before I was dealing with a mere premonition, a deadly prescience. I never could grapple with the unseen."

"The peril which menaces you is still unseen, don't forget that. No human hand connected with any of these crimes has as yet been seen."

"Very true," he assented with a deep breath. "God bless you, Dunmore. I place myself in your hands."

"Let us go out," I said briefly.

We went out on deck. There were but few people there, for there was something of a chill in the air. We walked forward and stood a while by the rail in silence. I recalled the conversation which Frochard had overheard between Smithson and myself. Well, it had revealed nothing, after all, but what they probably already knew.

Smithson's story had been an interesting revelation. I understood a little clearer the purpose of the crooks. Of course, America was at war with Germany as yet; still, there was plenty of opportunity for German spies and secret agents to do much harm to my country. That it was the purpose of these men to do this and that they were in the pay of the Imperial government was clear.

So far I was not able to exactly grasp the connection between them and The Spectre. He, I was convinced, was one of the most dangerous and supernatural crooks in the world. The pretense of gold-mining maintained by Langhorne was probably but a cloak to mask his real profession—that of crook and spy. He, with The Spectre and others—to what number, I knew not—were deep in plots of crime in every part of the earth.

It was gigantic, stupendous. I knew full well that personally I had not the ability to cope with them. Walton, however—ah! the master mind, the shrewd brain, the clever prognosticator—he alone could do it.

For the nonce I could only play the shadow, do what I could to protect Smithson and carry out my mentor's instructions.

"Pretty chilly out here, Dunmore," spoke up Smithson

presently. "Suppose we take a tour through the cabin?" So we went in through a corridor, which took us past the smoking-room. A score or more of men were gathered there and at one of the tables we saw the coterie—Langhorne, Vassilovitch and Frochard—engaged in an earnest game of cards. Three others sat at the table with them, men who appeared of the business type.

Smithson hesitated, and I acted with sudden resolution. "Come," I said, "let us watch the play."

"They will see us together."

"Just what I want," I said.

A number of spectators were grouped about, watching the play as we joined them. I saw that Langhorne was dealing. As he shuffled the cards, he looked up and caught my eye. I saw his flabby face harden a little and his eyes reflected a steely glint. He accorded me no token of recognition.

When the hands were completed, Vassilovitch threw down his cards. One of the business men did the same. Frochard languidly tossed a few chips on the board. "I fancy it," he said.

"I'll raise you," and Langhorne shoved a heap of ivory into the center. In a few moments the stakes were raised to a surprising amount. There were hundreds in the pot. Frochard held his cards downward and fingered their edges hesitatingly. Langhorne was watching him closely.

One of the two other players, whom I heard them call Tyler, nervously deposited four blue chips in the center. "I call," he said.

"Too early for a show-down," said Langhorne languidly; "cost you another hundred."

And he raised. I saw the man Tyler bite his lip. He was ghastly pale. Frochard remained in the game.

The fourth player threw down his cards with disgust. "I'd like to know who is bluffing," he complained. "I wish I had something."

"Maybe your hand is good," said Langhorne; "stay to the finish and see."

But he did not. Tyler hesitated and then with a gulp met the raise. It was up to Frochard. The Frenchman fingered his goatee a moment and glanced sidewise at Tyler. The Russian, Vassilovitch, was lazily lighting a cigarette. He leaned over toward Langhorne to fling his match into a cuspidor.

Smithson gripped my arm. "Did you see that?" he whispered.

"What?"

"I'll swear my eyes did not deceive me. I certainly saw a card shoot into Langhorne's lap under the table."

I exchanged glances with the big miner. I was not surprised, neither was he. The game was undoubtedly crooked. What was more natural than that these three crooks should work together? I felt like warning Tyler. Of course, that was not possible.

Frochard, after some deliberation, met the raise. Every player held his hand face downward, so no spectator knew their status. Suddenly Tyler leaned over the table, saying huskily:

"For God's sake, give me a chance. I've got a good hand, maybe not a winner. If you raise again I shall have to drop out, for I have staked every dollar I have in the world to meet that last raise of yours. Be square and call. I'm a man of family. When I get off this boat I won't have a penny in my pocket to take home to them, unless I win this hand. This is the God's truth, gentlemen. Give me a chance."

For a moment the silence was appalling. Every eye was fixed on Langhorne. Such an unusual and startling outburst created a tremendous sensation. Tyler was very white and his eyes had a strained expression. Langhorne's yellow eyes were half concealed by his lowered lashes. He sat a moment, silently looking narrowly at Tyler. It made me think of a tiger about to leap on its helpless prey. Then he removed his cigar from his mouth and laid it on the table.

"So," he said with a sort of purr in his voice, "that's the way it stands with you, eh? The more fool you! I hate a squealer!"

"Stop!" exclaimed Tyler hotly. "I am not squealing."

"Certainly you are. Part of the game of poker is bluff. If you overstay your limit like a fool, that is your loss, isn't it?"

"I think I am warranted in asking this favor. I have played at this table with you fellows for two nights now, and I have lost sixteen thousand dollars. Surely, you ought to be satisfied."

"See here," said Langhorne brutally, "you say you have lost sixteen thousand dollars here at this table?"

"Yes."

"Supposing you had won that amount? Would you have given it back to us?"

"If you were in the same position that I am in at present, I certainly would."

"Piffle!" snapped Langhorne. "Poker is a man's game, not a woman's. There is no sentiment in it."

"Then you refuse?"

"I raise the pot six blue chips, six hundred dollars," said Langhorne coldly. "What do you say, Johnny Crapeau?" to Frochard.

Every eye was on Frochard. Tyler had sunk weakly back in his chair. There was a faint murmur among the spectators. This annoyed Langhorne, for he read sympathy in it and he flashed an angry glance over his shoulder.

The Frenchman, being, as both Smithson and I believed, a colleague of Langhorne's, would, of course, drop out of the game, allowing Langhorne to take the pot. Instead, to my surprise, he picked up his hand and studied it closely, knitting his brows thoughtfully. "M'sieur has a good hand, no doubt," he said finally, looking at Langhorne impersonally.

"Call me and see."

"M'sieur is hard on our friend," elevating his shoulders and indicating Tyler.

Langhorne's yellow eyes blazed. "What are you going to do, Frenchy?"

"Stay, m'sieur," said Frochard suavely. "It is to raise you six more the chips that are blue."

Even Tyler was astonished and came back to an upright position. Very languidly Frochard pushed six blue chips, with another six, into the pile. Langhorne's jaw dropped and a sickly gray crept up under his puffy eyes as he stared at the Frenchman.

Then he chuckled hoarsely. "I'll take you on," he growled. "I call you. I call you—show-down!"

"M'sieur does not care to go higher?"

"Oh, cut your bluff! Here are four queens. I guess that settles it."

Langhorne's hand crept out to rake in the chips, but Frochard very deliberately, and with a daintiness of manner peculiar to his nationality, laid his cards down, face upward. There was something like a hoarse growl from the end of the table, and Vassilovitch was seen to be leaning over, staring at the cards, showing his teeth like a wolf.

However, I had only barely time to take this in. Langhorne's puffy face had changed from yellow to purple. He half arose from his chair. "You——" he began, but what he would have said ended in a gurgle and he sat back with a forced laugh. "You win, Frenchy," he uttered; "count up and I'll cash in."

There was the sound of a chair scraping on the floor and Tyler, haggard and gaunt, arose and staggered out of the cardroom. Many pitying glances followed him.

I could see that Smithson's hands were clenched and his jaw set. "I've a good mind to expose this thing, Dunmore," he whispered. "Langhorne made up that hand with the assistance of the Russian."

"It would not be advisable," I remonstrated; "perhaps we can help the poor chap otherwise. It was foolish of him to play, anyway."

I saw Frochard carefully count the money handed him by Langhorne. I thought I saw a slight glance of comprehension pass between them. In my inmost mind I decided that it was only a bluff, after all, for what mattered it which of the trinity of crooks won?

I was sickened with the thing and turned to draw Smith-

son away with me, when I saw Frochard looking intently at me. There was an intensity in his gaze that puzzled me and then I received a distinct shock. Very slowly he drew the lash of his right eye down and winked at me.

Quickly he averted his gaze after that, so that I could not flash him a glance of inquiry. I was puzzled, to say the least.

A few moments later, when Smithson and I were in my stateroom, I asked:

"Didn't you tell me that Frochard was in collusion with those scoundrels?"

"He assuredly is. I distinctly overheard him talking with the Russian, Vassilovitch, concerning their connection with the German Secret Service."

"Queer," I mused. "If I was to follow my nose I would pick this fellow Frochard to be a decent sort."

"All a bluff, Dunmore," said Smithson with conviction. "It was better for appearances' sake that Langhorne should lose that pot. Do you see?"

"Oh, of course," I assented. "I'm sorry for that chap Tyler."

Smithson raised his right fist. "The sooner that band of sharks and thieves are rounded up, the better for all humanity," he said forcibly. "I feel like drawing a bead on every mother's son of them. If it was in Montana, now—well, I'll say no more."

I must admit I was wholly in sympathy with Smithson. A few moments later he went into his stateroom to retire. I was sitting up, poring over my note-book, when I heard a faint scratching sound at my stateroom-door and a barely audible knock. Instantly I sprang up and threw it open. No person was there, and I peered down the passage to see that no one was in sight. However, on the sill my eye caught a slip of white paper. I picked it up and in the cabin-light read a startling communication:

"Forward of the after lifeboat, port-side. Come.
"A FRIEND."

CHAPTER EIGHT

I DON'T know why it was that I was so instantly impressed with the importance of this unexpected and surprising communication. I read it several times, pondering and analyzing.

Some one wanted me to meet him, or her, at the after lifeboat, port-side of the ship. Who, and why? These were my first queries.

Naturally, I scented a trap; yet, I thought, my enemies must be obtuse indeed or hold my intelligence cheap to think I would walk into such a clumsily arranged net. The very fact convinced me that it was nothing of the kind.

I tried to think of some one on board who would be prompted to make such an appointment with me. Smithson was the only person with whom I had any sort of intimacy. Then a suspicion ran through my mind—the chirography!

I had seen it before on the message Langhorne had received from his daughter on the Liverpool Express. In an instant I had it; of course, it was she.

The wildest sort of a theory flashed through my brain. She had not dared to speak to me, even to know me. This was positive evidence that she wished to prove to me her good faith, if not more. And what was the use of theorizing? I knew I would keep that appointment, even at the risk of my life.

Hastily I made my way to the deck. The hour was late and hardly a person was out. The watch paced the bridge above as I sped under it and made my way along the rail.

Here it was—the after lifeboat—and feverishly I approached, casting furtive glances about. If it was a trap, I was ready. Suddenly I caught the faint sheen of a silken gown in the shadows beyond the boat. The next moment I saw a delicate hand thrust out, as if beckoning. I went straight on. In a few seconds I was beside her. Her touch drew me back into the shadows, between the boat and the rail. It was very dark here.

"I feared you would not come," in a low tone, the same voice that had so charmed me at our first meeting, "and that you would not trust me."

"Trust you," I gulped.

"Yes; you see, I feared you would not understand my denial of you when papa brought you to me. I have wanted to see you ever since, to explain, to tell you that there was a reason. It was to save your life."

"My life?" I stammered.

I felt her delicate figure trembling like a dainty reed in a storm, and impulsively I put out my arm and supported her.

"Yes, yes; I have much to tell you and a warning to give you. Oh, it is awful!" She shuddered, and the anguish her voice contained smote me to the heart. I waited for her to go on. "You see, it is a terrible story. I cannot tell you in words the awful things I have seen and been through and have had to do. Sometimes I have wished that I might die. Once, when mamma was alive and I was a little girl, my father was a good man. He is very wicked now; he has broken my heart. It was his love for gold. He sold his soul—yes, he told me so himself—to get gold. He sold it to the devil." She sobbed on my shoulder while I held her closely, my heart bounding wildly. I could not trust myself to speak, so I waited. "There is a man—an awful creature, tall and ghost-like—who sells men's souls to the devil. They call him The Spectre. When I see him I am frightened. If he looks at me I am obliged to do anything he tells me to do. I feel very wicked, for I am afraid I have been made to do things that are bad. I do not know or remember when I am doing them. If I have stolen, I do not know it. Oh, I have begged my father to have nothing more to do with him, to be good again. He says he cannot. He has gone too far. Oh, pity me, pity me!" She broke down and now lay limply in my arms. I was in a singular mental condition. My heart yearned to draw her closer to me and pour words of her consolation into her ear. "But I could not stand it to know that they were plotting to kill you. I——"

"To kill me?"

"Oh, yes, yes; they know who you are. They know that you are a detective, and they hate you. They mean to kill you. They would kill me, if they knew that I had done this thing—that I had come here to warn you." Suddenly she drew back from me quickly, impulsively. It was a change so startlingly sudden as to take my breath away. I took a step forward, but she put out her hands to ward me off. A faint, sobbing laugh escaped her lips. "Forgive me for showing such weakness," she said in a firm, clear voice. "My nerves got the best of me."

"Arline," I burst out, no longer able to control myself, "I understand; I see it all. Don't shrink from me. I did not know then; I see it all now. From my first glimpse of you I knew my fate. I love you, Arline; I love you! I will be your protector! I will die for you! Oh, I love you madly!"

I do not know what more mad words I said. The whirlwind of my passion had mastered me wholly. For an instant I saw her waver, slightly move toward me, and the answer to my challenge in her glorious eyes, and then——

She shrank away along the rail, her face transfigured with fear. Aghast and astounded, I ceased speaking and my heart almost stopped its beating.

"How dare you to speak so to me!" And she fled like a spirit into a corridor, which led into the cabin, and vanished. With a great tumult in my brain I could only stare after her, when I became conscious of a long, deep shadow that fell between me and the corridor-light.

A man, tall and sinister, had stepped from the shadow. A hoarse, chuckling laugh grated on my hearing:

"*Pardieu!* M'sieur is mistaken. My dear m'sieur, there is no chance. The lady is—well, a cat. Pouf! I know it, for I found her so myself."

Vassilovitch, with a sardonic grin under his black beard, leaned against the corridor-door. There was blended amusement and sympathy in his tone. He stood twirling

his long mustache and shaking with what seemed like friendly interest.

A red mist flashed before my eyes. I could have killed him. Then I mastered myself and grasped the situation. I knew now why she had repelled me. My heart sang with the joy of the understanding. With all the sang-froid I could summon, I laughed jeeringly:

"Ah, well said, m'sieur. We do not know our chances until—until we try."

"Quite right," he assented affably; "it is a long trip on this accursed Atlantic voyage, m'sieur, and one misses those things that one so easily obtains in—well, let us say our dear Paris."

"You know her?"

"Not at all. I have endeavored to. Her gambling, gold-grubbing father, he even will not present me to her," he laughed genially. "I would sell my chance for a franc and also I would not give you a sou for your chance. A charming evening, m'sieur. You are, I take it, American?"

The impulse prompted me to encourage his comrade-like advances. We leaned over the rail, while he chatted lightly, after the manner of a born *boulevardier*, even waxing so confidential as to rehearse various questionable adventures in which he had figured in the inner circles of a certain kind of Parisian life.

I played my game as craftily as I was able, knowing that he was also doing the same. I must match my wits against his. Not for a moment was I deceived. I discovered, however, that he was possessed of a strange, compelling magnetism that placed him far out of the ordinary type of humanity. I found myself having to resist it, much to my surprise. Knowing him to be a member of the world's greatest coterie of crooks, I was on my guard.

After a while we strolled slowly forward. Finally he stopped, and, extending his hand with frank courtesy, made a courteous bow and said politely:

"The pleasure has been great, m'sieur; I wish I were able to assist you in your *amour*."

"That is kind of you, but I think I will abandon it," I said carefully.

"It may be wise. However, *bonne chance!* We will meet again before the voyage is over."

The significance of this last sentence did not escape me. He vanished in the cabin, leaving me to a multitude of reflections. I tried to analyze the facts. How much did he know? Did he suspect the appointment? Had he overheard anything? The girl said his gang knew I was a detective.

These were queries for which I could find no answer. Finally I went back to my stateroom; I was conscious of the necessity for great wariness of procedure henceforth. As my identity and my purpose were known, my position was perilous in the extreme.

I was not a victim of fear. Quite to the contrary, I felt a fierce thrill of delight that I was pitted against this cabal of dangerous crooks. I was determined to signalize myself. In my heart I felt that I was working for a prize far greater than all else on earth; for I was convinced that my love for the girl was reciprocated.

I did not disturb Smithson, who was in his stateroom, next to mine. I could tell him all in the morning. It was long after midnight when I fell into a dreamless sleep and did not awake until long after daybreak.

I dressed myself to go to breakfast. I now had time to consider the events of the previous evening with greater calmness. To my surprise, they presented quite a different aspect. I realized quite suddenly that I had a mighty problem to solve.

In the first place, my duty demanded that I place this precious trio of conspirators behind bars the moment New York was reached. In order to do this, I must communicate with the police as well as our Secret Service branch in that city. I had not the least doubt that I would be able to establish a case against them, for the testimony of Smithson, also the fact that they had incriminating papers with them, should be sufficient.

But the arrest must be made promptly and unexpectedly, before they could rid themselves of the evidence. My course was simple enough. A day before our landing in New York I would use the wireless. I had our Secret Service code.

And then I thought of her; that caused me some concern. She was technically, if not materially, an accomplice. That she should also come under the ban of the law I could not for a moment consider with composure. Perhaps she would abjure even her unfortunate and guilty parent and furnish evidence to convict, which would be sufficient to win the law's leniency. Yet I did not want to exact this. I was in a sore state of perplexity.

In my extremity I thought of Smithson. I would seek him and ask his opinion. I felt a desire to consult with some one.

I opened my stateroom-door and tapped on his door. There was no answer. Then it occurred to me quite naturally that he might be down to breakfast. I turned back to meet with a great surprise. Before me stood Monsieur Frochard. The Parisian's face showed apprehension, and he glanced at me and then up and down the corridor, and then astonished me by stepping boldly into my stateroom.

"M'sieur, I beg your pardon," he said in a low, earnest tone; "I must see you. It is of importance the most great. You will not give to me the refusal."

I stared at him. "I do not understand," I said for lack of other words.

"Ah, m'sieur, it is of the danger I fear. I must not be seen with you; it is to explain. Please!"

He made a sweeping bow. His manner was most earnest. Puzzled, I entered and closed the door. I saw him stand a moment and then place his ear to it, listening. Then he turned to me. "A thousand pardons, m'sieur. I shall tell you who I am. You know me perhaps as M'sieur Frochard. It is not so. I will to you prove—see!"

With which he swept back his coat, revealing his waistcoat, and there I saw, to my amazement, the gold cross of the Secret French Police.

For an instant I was speechless. "You are——" I began.

"M'sieur, it is to the true. I am a prefect. My credentials I will to you show. These two men—this M'sieur Langhorne and the Prince Vassilovitch—they are German spies. In the service of my country, I am tracking them. They seek your life. I am to ask of you the honor to be your friend, to help you, for you are also prefect *l'Americaine*. It is the right, am I not?"

This new and totally unexpected development so thoroughly unnerved me that I could not for some moments make reply, being able to do nothing but stare blankly at him.

CHAPTER NINE

AS I gazed at the French detective I fancied I caught a sort of odd twinkle in his eye, which brought to me a sudden recollection of the previous evening at the card-table, when he gave me the wink which had at the same time so mystified me. I understood now.

Yet I was suddenly wary. I knew the possibility of some treacherous game; perhaps it was a clever blind to gain my confidence; maybe a trap.

"You must know, M'sieur Frochard," I said, "that this causes me no little surprise. I have been informed that a certain Jules Frochard is undoubtedly a member of this blackmailing gang, of which a man known as Herr Von Strechler is supposed to be the head."

He gave a little shrug of his shoulders. "And so he is, M'sieur Onslow."

"What?" I exclaimed, startled. He had spoken my name.

"You see," he smiled, "it is to know you, that I do. Your friend, M'sieur Walton, he is also my very great friend. *Oui*, m'sieur, I assure you there is nothing to fear."

Then he drew from his pocket certain documents bearing French government stamps. He handed them to me and I glanced over them. Beyond doubt, they were genuine credentials, bearing the name of Pierre Montayne. I was impressed.

"Montayne!" I exclaimed; "then you are the famous

Parisian, master of the craft, of whom I have so often heard."

He made a deprecating gesture. "It is that m'sieur pays me the grand compliment," he smiled.

"But this Frochard?"

"Ah, it is to explain. You see, this is not mine"—he indicated his goatee—"and the complexion—I am fair, Frochard is dark; oh, very dark. But I impersonate—you understand?"

I saw what he meant. He was in disguise, and clever it was indeed to deceive those crooks.

"But Frochard?"

Again the detective gave an inimitable shrug. "In the prison of La Force in Paris; behind the bars, as you Americaines tell it. I will tell you, m'sieur." He lowered his voice. "M'sieur Walton, he ask me to take this part. I oblige M'sieur Walton; he is a great man. I board the steamer at Liverpool. I see you; I know all," he chuckled. "M'sieur Walton instruct me to work with you. I play with these—these *canaille*, you see? I play my part. I get their secrets. M'sieur Walton instruct me to work with you. *Comprenez vous?*"

My mind cleared like a flash. I had no longer doubt. I was eager, excited. "Wonderful!" I exclaimed. "I think I see it now. Frochard was nabbed and jailed in Paris, so that you could impersonate him."

"*Oui*, m'sieur. It is true."

"Splendid!" I understood now the wonderful method of my mentor. Never was my respect for him greater, never was my awe more profound. Ah, a great man was Tobias Walton.

Montayne's face showed his delight that he had been able to make all clear to me. Then he proceeded to outline the plan given him by Walton. He was to play Frochard's part until we reached New York. There we were to give Langhorne and Vassilovitch an opportunity to land unmolested. The purpose of this was simple to understand. They would proceed to their headquarters, which was somewhere in the vicinity of New York. There was every reason to believe that at these headquarters would be found important incriminating evidence to convict every member of the gang. Montayne, in his character of Frochard, would be easily able to locate this. The rest would be simple, merely the descent upon and round-up of the gang.

With much elaboration Montayne detailed all this to me. I recognized the fact that he was an unusual man, if not the equal, at least nearly so, of Walton himself.

"There is one thing not quite clear to me," I said finally. "The Spectre."

Montayne wagged his head knowingly. "Shall we not leave him to M'sieur Walton?"

"Of course," I burst out; "he is the high game. We are to round up the subordinates."

"M'sieur is quite to the right," he said affably, "and now we shall understand each other. I might have waited until we reached New York before revealing myself to you, but for your safety I had to warn you. They recognized you; they mean to kill you."

"Forewarned is forearmed."

Montayne narrowed his gaze and regarded me steadily. "M'sieur does not fully realize his peril. It is very great."

"I shall be on my guard."

"Of one thing beware"—he leaned forward and looked at me intently, then added—"the woman."

If I had been smitten with a thunderbolt the shock could not have been greater. My jaw fell, I felt a hot flush creeping into my temples and my heart beat hard and fast. Something like a sense of resentment rose within me and I think he saw it in my eyes, for he hastened to say:

"Be so good as to listen, dear m'sieur. It is not the imputation upon the lady's character, m'sieur; ah, nothing so unchivalrous. I pay the lady the compliments her due. It is the—the—what you call the—complications. *Comprenez vous?*"

"Oh, I see," and I laughed with lightened heart. "I shall be discreet. You will pardon me if I insist in my belief that she is everything that is chaste and pure and true."

He bowed with extravagant politeness. "Far be it from me to deny that, m'sieur; I am a Frenchman."

I liked him from that moment. These French—how they do know the proprieties. I felt like a clumsy muff beside him. We conversed but a few moments longer. He continually glanced at the door. Several times he went to it and applied his ear and also went to the port.

A sudden thought struck me. I spoke of Smithson. His face grew grave. "He is marked for death," he said; "but he will not die."

"We must guard him."

He nodded. "It is very bad," he said; "this man, Le Diable—no The Spectre, you call him—he is, I believe, really the devil's own. He has strange powers. He is not human." Again I felt that creepiness that I had felt so often before. Then Montayne lowered his voice. "This is something which will interest you, m'sieur. The gentleman Smithson is marked for death. He is not alone. There is another, and he is one of the devil's own, too. Yes, it is true. I alone know it, except—well, Le Diable himself."

I was dumfounded. "Do you mean there is dissension between the members?"

"The man with the beautiful daughter—he who has sold himself for gold—ah, it is a sad story, very sad. He was once an honest man. Le Diable covered him with gold, made him a millionaire, and in payment took his soul. In all things he has bowed servilely before him, but one. Can you guess it?"

He paused and it seemed as if cold fingers were suddenly closing about my heart. "I think I can," I huskily replied. "The daughter."

"The *demoiselle, un petite fille, oui*, m'sieur. He wants to get her, but there is manhood enough left in the father to refuse him that."

I drew a deep, shuddering breath and started to rise. My full intention at that moment was to seek her and place myself openly by her side as her protector. He grasped me by the shoulders and forced me back.

"*Non, non*," he said sharply; "no foolishness. Be wise, m'sieur. It shall not be so with her. I will see to that. But the father"—he shrugged his shoulders; inimitably—"perhaps it is not for the worst. He is doomed; he cannot be saved. Better, after all, the card of fate for him, and better for her. You see, he will be spared the fate meted out to a murderer by the law. She will not see her father meet that fate."

"Langhorne—he is also marked?"

"To my knowledge."

"But this devil in human shape—this Spectre—is he to be allowed——"

"Sh-h!" whispered Montayne. "Please, not so loud, m'sieur."

"Who is to commit this crime? Not The Spectre himself. He is in London. Walton probably has him in hand already."

"*Oui*, perhaps," said Montayne in a detached way; "so, M'sieur Onslow, I will beg of you to be circumspect. If you receive another message from mademoiselle, heed it not. It will be the decoy; you will go to your death. She will not send it, for she knows."

I drew a deep, hard breath. "I will obey you, M'sieur Montayne."

He bowed deeply and stepped lightly to the door, holding up his hand to enjoin silence. The next moment he was gone. For many minutes I sat in deep meditation over all these things, so startlingly revealed to me. The more I pondered the more terrible and unearthly aspect this man, The Spectre, assumed. I felt a cold chill traversing the very marrow of my bones. But I felt greatly reassured, now that I knew what Walton's plan was. I had no doubt but that Montayne, the famous French detective, would successfully carry out his part. Of course, Walton, in London, would eventually land the big game. But I was fearful concerning Arline. I knew that Langhorne and Vassilovitch were expected to carry out their espionage plot in America and that they did not suspect

Frochard. Doubtless The Spectre had planned to come over by a later boat.

I was powerfully tempted to endeavor to get an interview with Arline and warn her of the plot against her father. Vassilovitch, expecting the assistance, perhaps, of the supposed Frochard, meant to obey The Spectre's command to dispose of Langhorne, or possibly this would be deferred until The Spectre himself came.

What a diabolical network of villainy it all was. There was a thought that perhaps Langhorne, discovering the treachery of his employer, might break away and abandon the dark career into which his fatal cupidity had tempted him. I saw, however, the impossibility of this, even had he been willing. His hands were already reddened with crime which the law could not overlook, which meant that his fate was sealed, anyway.

At last I roused myself and had decided to go down to my breakfast, when there was a light rap on the door. It opened and Smithson came in. Never was human being more welcome to me, for I felt the need of talking to some one. So I drew him into a chair, and in a whisper told him all that I knew. He listened with the deepest interest.

I saw a light kindle in his eyes and color come into his face. "I can see the beginning of the end, Dunmore," he said; "there can be no fail. Your wonderful friend Walton will surely round up Le Diable, as the French detective calls him. Then this Montayne, of whose fame I have heard much, will net these birds in America. The whole villainous combine will be broken up and honest men's lives will be again safe."

"Let us hope so," I agreed; "but the fate which threatens Langhorne——"

"If it befalls him, it will be only a stroke of justice. Ah," he continued, "I believe you are thinking of her."

"That is true," I admitted.

"I cannot but believe that she will emerge from it all safely and perhaps I may some time have the joy of offering congratulations."

"Smithson," I said, "I have never confided in any one as I have in you."

"Be assured that your trust will never be betrayed."

"I am going to make another attack upon your confidence," I said.

"Ah!"

"I am thoroughly convinced that nature never intended me for the detective profession. As soon as I am clear of this case I shall resign."

He sat back in his chair and looked at me attentively. "Why?"

"Well, my mental capacity—in that direction, at least—is too limited. Never in the world could I have fathomed the intricacies of this case, as Walton has. Moreover, he does it all with apparently the least possible effort. He is a great man. I could never hope to approach his pinnacle. Therefore, knowing that I am merely ordinary, I am yet wise enough to accept the fact and shall govern myself accordingly."

"Well, you may be right, Dunmore. The profession of a detective, I have always believed, was much akin to that of the poet, in one way—one must be born to it in order to accomplish anything."

"Quite right," I assented.

"Now that you have made your decision, have you considered what other profession to adopt?"

"Horny-handed labor, I guess," I laughed. "It is probably what I am best fitted for."

"Now we are coming down to brass tacks," and he rubbed his hands. "I shall need a mine superintendent out there in Montana, possibly a partner later."

"I am grateful to you," I said warmly. "I will consider your generous offer."

Then I remembered that I had not had my breakfast. Smithson consented to bear me company and we went down to the dining-hall.

CHAPTER TEN

ALL that day I kept away from the main deck and cabin as much as possible. I caught a glimpse of Arline and her father once, walking on the hurricane-deck. She was clinging to his arm and seemed to me to be exhorting him quite earnestly.

I could guess why, and saw him repeatedly shake his head. It stirred me greatly, and I with difficulty held myself to my promise with the pseudo Frochard.

I saw him constantly in the company of Vassilovitch and I knew his reasons. What a pretty kettle of fish it all was. What a dark game of cross purposes was being enacted on board the great ship *Volturnia* on that voyage, and how little it showed on the surface.

Smithson was my constant companion. Once we chanced to cross the afterdeck just as the Russian prince came out of the cabin. I could see him pause and study us closely, his swarthy face wearing an inscrutable expression.

Langhorne had not played cards that day; in fact, from my observation of him, he seemed to lack his usual urbanity, and appeared a bit morose. Had Arline been able to impress him?

However, when evening came, I saw him in his accustomed place and Frochard was with him; but Vassilovitch was missing. I gave no real significance to this until later, when I entered my stateroom. I saw a delicately pencilled note, which had been thrust under the door. I picked it up. The chirography was singularly like Arline's, but I fancied it was a forgery. The note read:

"I must see you. Ten o'clock on hurricane-deck aft. Be sure and come.

A."

I smiled, and, folding the note, placed it in my pocket. I had expected something of the sort, so was not unprepared. However, an unconquerable desire seized me to see if she would really be there. I began to consider the possibility of visiting the hurricane-deck without being observed. At first I dismissed the idea. It kept recurring to me.

Then an idea struck me. I sat up in my stateroom until near the hour of ten. Then I slipped out and made my way to the port-side of the ship on the same deck. I knew the number of Arline's stateroom and I hovered in the shadows, watching. I saw a light beyond the shutter, and once saw a shadow flit across it.

She was within. If the appointment was genuine, she would soon come out. The ship's bell presently tolled the hour, but she did not emerge. I waited until the minutes passed into a half-hour, and then the light went out in her stateroom. Another half-hour, and I was convinced she had retired.

I had fooled my enemy. I could only conjecture what would have happened if I had kept the appointment on the hurricane-deck. I knew that I was strong and well able physically to take care of myself under ordinary circumstances, but I also knew that the mysterious unknown had never yet failed in his deadly work. Something impelled me to pass the cardroom on my way back to my stateroom. I glanced in and was startled to see that it was empty. That settled all doubts in my mind. I had reason for self-congratulation.

When I reached the corridor in which was my stateroom, I was confronted with a startling condition. The lights were out. I could see nothing beyond it. This had never occurred before, for the ship's lights burned all night. At that late hour no stewards were likely to be in that part of the ship, and the passengers must nearly all be in their berths. Some premonition held me back from entering the dark passage, and I was feeling for a match, when I heard heavy breathing and shuffling footsteps. Then out from the gloom came a thick voice:

"God be praised! It's you, Dunmore. I've had an awful experience."

Out of the shadows staggered Smithson. With horror I saw that he was bathed in blood. It covered his face and hands and dripped from his matted hair. I could see that

he was weak and faint, and, springing forward, I supported him.

"What has happened, Smithson?" I exclaimed. "What does this mean?"

"It—it means that I've had the fight of my life," he groaned.

"Fight?" I repeated. "With whom?"

"Oh, I don't know. Some sort of beast, I think. It did not seem like a human being. I am a strong man, Dunmore, or I would not be here now. I beat the thing off. I think it is in there now, dead maybe. Get me something, quick. I am very faint."

I was not foolish enough to invade the darkness of the corridor. I saw a light streaming through a near-by stateroom-door and rapped. The door opened and a man in pajamas, a passenger, faced me and then gave an exclamation of horror at sight of Smithson.

"What has happened?" he demanded.

"Kindly push the alarm button in your room," I requested. "This gentleman has been assaulted."

"Certainly!"

In a few moments the alarm call brought officials rushing to the scene. Much excitement ensued, during which the lights were renewed in the dark corridor and Simonson was carried to his berth, while the ship's surgeon gave him attention.

Then the investigation began. The mysterious assailant could not be found. Smithson told his story coherently. He was on his way to the stateroom, and, thinking that the lights had burned out, started to feel his way to his door, when something sprang upon him. "I cannot say what it was, whether man or beast," he said. "I beat it off finally and I thought I had killed it. That was all I could do, until I met my friend Dunmore."

She seemed not to see me. Then I understood. She was under the hypnotic spell.

All the officers of the ship were on hand by this time and high excitement reigned. The captain sternly ordered a most complete search of the ship. Every nook and corner was explored. Passengers were routed from their staterooms and inquiries made. It was all to no purpose. Not an explanation of the mystery was gained. The mysterious assailant could not be found.

It was a matter of great relief to me when the surgeon announced that Smithson's injuries would not be fatal. "He has lost much blood," he said; "there are many cuts about his face and chest and on the arms, as if a knife had been used."

It was daybreak before the excitement quieted down. The whole ship, passengers and crew, were for a time in a state of wild turmoil. All sorts of theories were formulated, all sorts of clues followed, but in vain. The mystery remained profoundly unsolved. The captain was greatly excited and did all in his power to clear the matter up. I, of course, remained most of the time by my friend's side. We two understood what it all meant, but for us to have made an open charge against those we had reason to suspect would have been sheer folly.

When at last I was alone with the big miner, he gave me a comprehensive look and said:

"It was my early training as a wrestler that saved me, Dunmore. I was in the clutches of a devil. Only my knowledge of catch-as-catch-can saved me."

"For which we must be thankful."

"Probably I am the first and only one who has ever come off victor with that party."

"Without doubt. Have you an idea who it was?"

"It didn't seem like a human being. I thought it was an animal of the gorilla species."

"Ah, I see," said I. "Well, it is a mystery that must be solved."

I left him to rest, which was needful, and went down to my breakfast. At the captain's table I saw Arline and her father. She did not look in my direction, and I could see that she was very pale. I longed to catch a glance from her and give her a reassuring look, but she gave me none. Presently I saw the Russian and Frochard enter. They were chatting unconcernedly and lightly. They saluted Langhorne and his daughter, and the man of gold greeted them urbanely, but I saw that Arline merely inclined her head and looked away from them. The captain came presently, and a lively conversation ensued. It chanced that my table was close to the cabin partition, and this acted as a conductor of sound, so that I was enabled to catch much that was said. "Ah, captain," said Langhorne in his brisk way, "I understand there was some excitement during the night. A quarrel and a fight, was it?"

I saw the captain elevate his eyebrows. "A gentleman was assaulted, I believe," he replied. "We are investigating."

"Was it as serious as that?" asked Vassilovitch.

"Quite serious, I think. The surgeon says that he had a narrow escape from death."

"Is there any clue to his assailant, M'sieur Capitaine?" asked Frochard politely.

I hung on the answer. The captain finished carving his chop before answering. "We have just a faint clue. One of the passengers, who has a stateroom in that corridor and who was wakeful, said that he observed the lights suddenly fail just after midnight. He opened his stateroom-door a-crack and was peering out, when the figure of a man passed. In the flash of his own stateroom light he caught a momentary glimpse of his face, and its peculiar pallor and expression impressed him so greatly that he closed and quickly locked his door."

Frochard gave his long mustache a pull and asked cas-

ually: "M'sieur Capitaine, it is of the greatest interest."

The captain shook his head. "No person of the description given is on our passenger-list. That is why we attach but little importance to this passenger's statement."

I saw Vassilovitch lower his brows a little and look at Frochard. The Frenchman, however, appeared not to see the look, and, leaning forward, asked again with apparent curiosity:

"But the strange man, M'sieur Capitaine, he was, you say, pale and——"

"Oh, I think it may have been the effect of the stateroom light," answered the captain; "the passenger described him as very tall and dressed in a gray suit, with a gray slouch hat. His face, he said, was long and thin and cadaverous, and he had terrible eyes. Pouf! it is imagination. No such person is on our ship," and the captain, with great finality, folded his napkin and arose from the table.

I thought I saw Arline grow a shade paler, and Langhorne gave Frochard a swift side glance, and as the captain left them, a low-toned conversation ensued between them, which I could not hear.

As for myself, my sensations were such as are not easily described. The description given by the captain was that of The Spectre. I saw how wholly improbable it must be, for Von Strechler was in London. Unless he had supernatural powers, he could scarcely have reappeared in the flesh aboard the *Volturnia*. Yet, how strange that the passenger's description so accurately tallied with that of The Spectre. My brain whirled; I could eat no more, and, rising quickly, left the dining-hall.

I sought to learn by inquiry where I could find the captain. I located him finally on the ship's bridge, and, accosting him quietly, I asked the name of the passenger and the number of the stateroom. He hesitated, looking at me inquiringly.

"You will understand," I said; "here is evidence of my good faith," and I showed him my badge. Instantly he straightened and puckered his lips with a slow whistle.

"Ah, I understand," he said; "I do not like to know that there are suspicious characters aboard my ship."

"This, my dear captain," I said impressively, "is a critical period. Great events concerning the fate of many nations are impending. The world is on the brink of a mighty overthrow. Spies and secret assassins are lurking everywhere, ready to strike for the interests of those whom they represent. It is ever thus in time of war."

I saw his bronzed face change a little. "You are doubtless right," he admitted, and then he gave me the information I desired. "Caleb Ottman, stateroom 294."

I went at once to stateroom 294 and tapped gently at the door. To my joy, the occupant was in, and a moment later I got the story from his own lips.

He was a thick-set man of the business type. He was a dealer in leather and had been in Germany, taking orders for hides, but a month previous.

"Of course," and he shrugged, "the officers of the ship think my eyesight deceived me, but I have good vision and I distinctly saw the individual whom I describe to you. I shall scarcely forget him. He was a most unusual person, and I would not care to meet him in a dark place. Yet, of course, he may not be the guilty party at all."

I was in a strange state of mind when, after thanking Mr. Ottman, I left him and started for my stateroom. There I sat down, and for an hour tried to think connectedly. What did it mean? Had The Spectre a counterpart? Was he really aboard the *Volturnia*? Could Ottman be the victim of a curious optical illusion?

I finally left my stateroom, intending to go to the upper deck. At the end of the corridor were stairs. I had ascended to the fourth step, when I saw a figure approaching to descend. I stopped short. Tall, angular, dressed in somber gray, his white, ghastly death-head's face half hidden under the brim of his wide gray slouched-brim hat—The Spectre!

The next instant the hateful, baleful, deadly gaze met mine, and I know that I faced death.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

I HAVE in the course of my life often scouted fatalism. That the end of life is foreordained in every case is the belief of many, and that until the fatal hour is struck, or decreed by fate, man cannot die.

At that deadly moment, when I came face to face with the creature whose power to evade justice seemed omnipotent, I had but one thought, and that was that my hour had come. I stood absolutely powerless, every nerve in my being paralyzed, every muscle loosed. I could neither move nor speak, and from the moment I met his gaze utter supine helplessness held me. I saw, as through a dim red mist, that he was advancing on me—and then oblivion. I afterward imagined that I had been hypnotized.

When I came back—for I came back—I found myself supported by two men, and as my vision cleared I saw that they wore the uniform of the ship's stewards.

"All right," I heard one of them say, "just a little more of that brandy. He's coming around all right."

"Gee!" the other exclaimed, "I surely 'opes so. I thought 'e was a dead 'un. Looked like a bloomin' corpse."

My resuscitation was almost instantaneous. I staggered to my feet, brushing away an imaginary mist from before my eyes. I had but a single impression at the moment, which was one of surprise.

The stewards, seeing that I was able to stand, now stepped back, looking at me closely. "Must 'ave 'ad a bloomin' fit, sir," said one of them, who was plainly a Cockney.

"Did—did you see him?" I asked.

"Oh, the other guy? Sure! He's gone along. We was right behind you when you dropped. Can we do anything more for you, boss?"

"Thank you," I said with a show of spirit. "I think I was a bit faint. I'm quite all right now. I am very grateful."

I pressed a coin in the hand of each and they walked leisurely away, still occasionally looking back as if to make sure that they might take me at my word. Then I turned back to my stateroom. As I reached it I heard a step behind me and Smithson was at my elbow, all patched up with court-plaster.

"You look as if you had seen a ghost, Dunmore," he exclaimed.

"I have," I said positively.

"See here, you're ill, man. Let me help you."

And he assisted me into the stateroom. He pulled a whisky-flask from his pocket, but I held up my hand. "I have seen him," I said.

His face showed astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"That devil in human shape—The Spectre!"

Smithson was himself pale and somewhat weak from his experience of the previous night. I was surprised to see that he was up and about again. He dropped into a chair opposite me. "You saw him?" He stared at me.

"Yes," and I told him my experience.

I saw his eyes dilate and he glanced apprehensively over his shoulder. "Then it is easy to understand what I was grappling with in the dark," he said. "I cannot understand it, though. Le Diable is supposed to be in London. Is he superhuman?"

"I don't know," I said wearily. "I can only say that I must be an awful coward. I was never so humiliated in my life. Instead of grappling with him and making his arrest, I fell in a faint like a baby."

"See here, Dunmore, you're not a coward. There is a reason for that. Perhaps he hypnotized you."

With a little shock it came to me then. "Thunder!" I exclaimed. "What a fool I am. It was not until he got my eye that I collapsed. Of course—hypnotism! That is what it was. He got me, and but for those stewards there would have been another tragedy on board this steamer."

I saw the truth then; I never knew before that I was susceptible to that singular power called hypnotism. No doubt Von Strechler was a master of the art. Still, I

should have avoided meeting his concentrated gaze. I had my revolver and could have shot him.

"Dunmore," said Smithson firmly, "something must be done about this. That murderous fiend is certainly hidden somewhere aboard this ship. No doubt his confederates are secreting him, perhaps in one of their staterooms. This must be impressed upon the officials of this boat, and he must be found and held."

"The most thorough search of the ship possible has been made."

"Well, we must make another. We must enlist every person on board in quest. I would suggest that these men whom we know to be his colleagues should be placed under arrest—this Parisian and the man Langhorne."

"You forget," I said with a smile, "we have not an iota of evidence against them. It would be as logical for them to bring a charge against us as for us to bring one against them."

He drummed with his fingers on the arm of his chair. "Yet you will admit that we are neither of us for a moment safe."

"I fully admit that," I said. "I don't see how we can help it, though, except to be constantly on our guard. This is the sixth day of the voyage. We are due to dock tomorrow. If we can hold off till then, I think we can do something. I will get the New York police by wireless and they can meet us at Quarantine. I don't believe The Spectre is ethereal. If he is on this ship, as our eyesight tells us he is, we must get him. The police can do it."

We agreed upon this plan. For the rest of the day Smithson and I kept close with each other. Neither was out of the other's sight a moment. We even decided to occupy the same stateroom, and, if necessary, one should sleep while the other watched. We were both conscious that we were dealing with a power more cunning and devilish than human senses could understand. If we could hold that power at bay until the ship reached the end of her voyage something might be done.

The mysterious attack upon Smithson had created a sensation on board the ship, but now that we were nearing port, the passengers rapidly lost interest in the matter. Every one was busy preparing for the usual landing experiences, such as Quarantine and Customs. The captain assured all that the detention in the former case would be merely formal, as there was no case of contagious disease on the ship.

So Smithson and I spent most of our time on the deck, keeping much with the other passengers. I passed the cardroom frequently and saw that Langhorne and the Russian, as well as Frochard, still played there. I saw little of Arline, who seemed to keep to her stateroom. I had decided to send the wireless when we should sight land.

The next afternoon, at four, the pilot came aboard. Then I started for the wireless-room. Smithson was with me, and I had hardly reached the door and heard the peculiar buzz of the instruments, when a man stepped out and paused before me. It was Montayne.

The French detective seemed to divine my purpose. "M'sieur is to send a message?"

I hesitated, and he read my purpose instantly. He shook his head imperatively. "*Non, non!*" he exclaimed. "*Nom de Dieu!* You ruin all! It must not be. You forget, M'sieur Walton his order to you give. You must obey."

I stood irresolute. I knew this last was true. It occurred to me that perhaps, after all, Walton had anticipated all that had happened and was prepared for it. I looked at Montayne, mystified.

"But," I said, "Walton has been fooled. "The Spectre has eluded him and is aboard this ship. I have seen him."

He smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "M'sieur Walton is not to be deceived," he said. "It is for you to go to the Hotel Ritz and wait."

That was why I did not send the wireless. Smithson and I went back to the deck. He was very thoughtful.

"Dunmore," he said, "I should think that you would feel like a candidate for the foolish house."

I couldn't help laughing. "Well, so I do," I admitted. "I seem to be a sort of shuttlecock in this game. What in thunder is Walton's game? I can't see through it."

"You are going to obey his command?"

"Yes."

"That means that when we dock you will stand idly by and see these crooks land and go their respective ways, and do nothing."

"That's what I must do."

"It beats me."

"Me, too," I confessed.

At Quarantine we were briefly held. Then we slid into dock about five o'clock, and disembarkation began. Smithson and I stood on the upper deck and watched the line swarm down the plank. Presently we saw Langhorne and Arline appear. They shook hands with Vassilovitch and Frochard, and, entering a taxi, were driven away. The latter two departed in another taxi.

But, though we remained there until the last passenger was off, we saw no tall gray figure with ashen face descend the steamer's plank. If The Spectre had taken his leave, he had done so invisible to the human eye.

"Well," said Smithson finally, "we're safe in America, Dunmore. I've no desire to remain longer aboard this ship. Its associations depress me."

We were soon on our way to the hotel. Arrived there we were assigned rooms and then I inquired for letters. The mail-clerk looked carefully over the list and at last handed me a cablegram. I read it with perplexity:

"THADDEUS ONSLOW—Co-operate with Montayne.
"WALTON."

I showed the message to Smithson. He read it and looked at me inquiringly. "Well?" he asked.

"It tells me nothing," I said with disappointment. "How am I to co-operate with Montayne? I do not know where he is, nor how to communicate with him."

"Perhaps he will communicate with you."

"He will have to. I suppose all I can do is to sit here supinely and wait. The whole thing about it is that I cannot see what purpose I have served in this affair."

"I can," said Smithson quietly.

"What?" I asked in surprise.

"Well, you have been constantly in surveillance on these rascals all the way across the Atlantic. They have known that you were sent to track them. That in itself has diverted their attention from him."

"Is that all?"

"Is it not much? Doubtless he has profited much by it. I have great faith in Walton."

"Well, so have I," I admitted, "only I do think he might be a little more open with me."

"Anyway, I would advise you to stay right here and await developments."

"Yes," I exploded, "and permit these hounds to slip the leash and perhaps perpetrate some other terrible crime in the meantime!" I was really thinking of Arline and the danger that threatened her. There was no doubt that Von Strechler would now carry out his purpose of disposing of Langhorne and fastening his hands upon her.

Smithson seemed to read my mind. "You forget one thing," he said.

"What?"

"Monsieur Montayne."

That was true. I had not reckoned upon the great French detective. It looked as if Walton had placed the high responsibility in his hands. Why had he not selected me? On second thought I saw that this would not have been possible, for Montayne was the only one who could have impersonated Frochard, and who was doubtless at that moment gaining complete knowledge of the headquarters of the gang. So I banished my jealousy with a little sense of shame. Smithson was right.

But the two long days that I waited in my room at the Ritz were days of suspense. It was irksome in the extreme, and finally I decided to abandon what seemed to me such a senseless course. "Walton expected probably that Montayne would keep in touch with me," I said. "He has failed to do so. Why should I waste time?"

I saw that Smithson did not share my views, but he said: "Far be it from me to oppose your good judgment, Onslow," calling me now by my right name. "I shall say no more. I have some small matters to attend to downtown. I will return later in the day."

With which he went out, leaving me alone. For a time I paced up and down the room, and then at last, unable to endure it longer, I went down to the street. Newsboys were crying papers. I could hear their excited cries:

"All about the murder! Extra!"

With a queer feeling—of what, I knew not—I bought one of the papers and glanced at the head-lines. I gasped and placed a hand at my throat as I read:

"MYSTERIOUS MURDER OF MILLIONAIRE LANGHORNE, KNOWN AS THE OWNER OF VALUABLE MONTANA GOLD MINES."

The details followed. I read them with strained vision:

"A taxi-driver had taken two men as fares from the Hotel Astor to be driven to the Plaza. One was known to him as Langhorne; the other was a tall, powerful man, with a black beard, whom he described as a Russian."

"Vassilovitch!" I muttered.

"When the taxi drew up at the Plaza the chauffeur dismounted to open the cab-door, and fell back in horror. In the interior of the vehicle lay the figure of Benton Langhorne, unrecognizable from terrible mutilation. The tall Russian had in some manner managed to get out of the cab while it was moving. The New York police were hot on the trail of the murderer. No clue has been, as yet, gained."

Sick with horror, I crushed the paper in my hands. My whole thought at that moment was of Arline. Of course, I knew from the first that all this had to happen. I had known the plot, and yet I had been held back from any effort to prevent it. By this time probably the arch fiend had Arline in his power, and——

I started along the street, hardly knowing where I was going. I felt that I must do something; I must get into action, or my brain would burst.

And then an astounding spectacle presented itself to me. Not a block away was the entrance of another great hotel; people thronged the streets, but among them I singled out a tall gray figure wearing a gray slouch hat—The Spectre! That was not all. By the arm he was escorting a female figure, deeply veiled. I knew her figure. It was Arline. Struck dumb for a moment, I stared until I saw him handing her into a taxicab, into which he himself stepped thereafter.

With a snarling cry of fury I started forward, only to be hurled roughly back by a powerful hand on my shoulder: "Monsieur! *Nom de Dieu!* It is not yet. You will the game spoil. *Non, non,* m'sieur! Be calm, m'sieur."

Montayne, cool and determined, was holding me. I glared at him in fury and would have felled him had not some strange light in his menacing eyes held me. "It shall be all right, m'sieur. *La petite fille* is not in danger. No harm shall come to her; I swear it—I, Pierre Montayne."

I hesitated, impressed by his words. "She is in the hands of that man."

"Assuredly, but only for the best, m'sieur. Believe me! I shall prove to you. Many things have happened. I have come for you. It is—well, by M'sieur Walton's orders."

What could I do? Confused, perplexed, and with my veins boiling, I was forced into a taxi by his side. Rapidly we sped through Fifth avenue, by the park, and still on. I looked ahead to see if we were following the other auto, but I could not see it. I could see that Montayne was very cool. Once he thrust his hand into his pocket and drew forth what looked like a set of steel knuckles. He gingerly replaced them.

"Montayne," I asked, "where are we going?"

"To the end," he replied enigmatically.

"The end——"

"Ah, m'sieur, it is the patience you must have. You are a good fighter? You will fight for the girl you love? It is well. You are to be the help for me. Ah! it is to be."

The taxicab swung a corner and drew up before a great brownstone house.

CHAPTER TWELVE

AS I sprang out of the auto, I saw that every window of the mansion was shuttered, as if its occupants were away, possibly on European travels. Up the steps Montayne drew me. The great door, with its heavy bossing, pushed easily inward, and we were in a tesselated vestibule. Montayne pushed an electric button twice, and then twice more sharply. The door swung open and a diminutive, dwarf-like figure in a lackey's livery stood there.

"Hein!" spoke Montayne in guttural German. *"Gott und der Kaiser."*

The dwarf stepped back, saying simply, *"Ja, ja!"*

Through a spacious and lofty hall we passed. Montayne had a hand on my arm. "M'sieur, do not speak. It is to look."

Through a grandly furnished reception-room we passed. I saw that everything was German—the Göttingen clock, the tiers of steins, the students' foils and caps on the wall, the tapestries of Mayence, and at one end of the room a great illuminated painting of the Kaiser.

Instantly I was impressed. "Good God, Montayne," I whispered, "it is a German nest of spies!"

"Hush!" he admonished, and slightly parted a drapery. At a great mahogany table, in a brilliantly lighted room, four men—heavy-jowled and solid Teutons, all—sat at council. There were maps spread before them. A little heap of steel cylinders beside the maps I recognized as explosive bombs.

Only a moment was I allowed to peer in upon this startling scene, when he dragged me through another room, past a couple of stolid lackeys, to whom he made a peculiar sign. Then we came to stairs leading down into darkness. I was conscious of a damp smell, as of the underground. Through a cold passageway we went, and I heard him jangle a chain and an iron bar. A door swung back and then light flashed out and I beheld that which held me for a moment transfixed.

He pushed me into the place and closed the door behind us. I saw that we were in an underground chamber with smooth cement walls. It was a huge room, with many recesses, and lighted by electric bulbs. Against the wall at one side were cabinets, upon one of which was a long row of grinning skulls. Over each was pasted a name. There was a long table in the middle of the room, beneath which were crucibles. Great retorts stood upon the table. There was a large case, which I saw was filled with test tubes. Then I recognized the place as the workshop of a chemist.

"Montayne," I whispered, "I would be glad if you would explain."

"Certainement, m'sieur," he said; "this is the place we have sought—the home of Le Diable."

"The Spectre?"

"Oui, m'sieur; you see, Herr von Strechler, king of all German spies, high in the regard of the Kaiser, man of the wonderful powers, is a very great chemist. He it is, m'sieur, who invents the high explosives, the deadly poisons, the machines of war with which Germania hopes to subdue my people of *la belle* France, as well as of the world. In this place, dear m'sieur, through which we have just passed, are plans for the destruction of some of your great cities, your beautiful Capitol at Washington, the great navyyards and other places. Ah, m'sieur, he is a very great rascal, this man Von Strechler."

I was overwhelmed. For a moment I stared about the place, as if I expected to see the fiend appear.

"Please to observe, m'sieur," said Montayne, leading the way to the opposite cabinet, "here are a collection of skulls. You will observe the names. It is the fad of Herr Von Strechler to keep these little trophies to remind him of those enemies whom he has vanquished. *Comprennez vous?* Is it not a cheerful pastime?"

With horror I gazed upon the ghastly evidence of the murderer's brutality.

"He hopes to have M'sieur Walton here soon. See, he has provided a place. It is his name, and—*pardieu!* do I read aright?—it is yours also."

Dumfounded, I read not only Walton's name but mine pasted over vacant spaces on the cabinet.

"It is his regret that he will not have M'sieur Langhorne's as well."

He then led me to the great glass case, in which were hundreds of test tubes. All contained liquids of varied colors. "These, m'sieur," explained Montayne, "are the most deadly germs known to science. To be specific, here is a germ that, upon inoculation, eats out the liver, troubling no other part of the body. The victim suffers tortures beyond the power of description. For it there is no reagent, no counter-germ. It is a lingering, horrible death. Four great men of France, hateful to Germany, have died of this germ."

He passed to another tube. "And here, m'sieur, is the streptococchi that destroys the skin and the tissue—in other words, the germ of leprosy. If that were liberated freely in New York, Manhattan Island would be uninhabitable in a score of years."

I turned away, sick with horror. "Montayne," I said, "is it the purpose of this monster to make use of these?"

"Against the enemies of Germany."

I was chilled to the marrow.

"It is not to the cheerful," he said turning from the table; "let us look at these." He indicated great jars, in which were vari-colored liquids and powders. "They are explosives deadly enough to crack the earth in half. A ton of that gray powder, m'sieur, would level Manhattan Island as a floor. Ah, what is to become of the world?"

"And these are secret? They belong to him?"

"Only he knows their composition."

"Then a great deal depends——"

"*Oui*, m'sieur; a great deal depends upon your wonderful M'sieur Walton."

"And you," I added.

"It is the grand compliment, m'sieur. I thank you."

It is not possible to describe the sensations I experienced at these astonishing revelations. Until this moment I had never had the slightest idea of the magnitude of the conspiracy of which Von Strechler was the recognized head. That such things could exist in free America, in the heart of the great city of New York, seemed preposterous. With one fact I was impressed. Surely, no other race on earth could have devised such ingenious and devilish weapons. To fight with sword and gun was warfare, but to employ mines and bombs and poisons and death germs was, to my mind, evidence of a lapse into barbarism which was setting the world back a thousand years.

We had now reached the end of the room. Upon a little dais sat a chair. As I was gazing at it, a faint tinkle, as of a tiny bell, sounded. Montayne turned, and appeared to listen.

"Ah, m'sieur"—he indicated the chair—"be seated and it will be my pleasure to show you something you have not seen."

He stooped to pick up an object under the long table. I complied with his request and sat down. In an instant I experienced a strange sensation. The chair rocked a little, swayed, and then, to my astonishment, I found that iron clamps had swung about and held me firmly pinioned in the chair.

Montayne stood looking at me, smiling and unconcerned. He drew out a cigarette and leisurely lighted it. I strove to get out of the chair. Something in his attitude, a strange light in his eyes, seemed to send a startling thrill through my being.

"What is this, Montayne?" I asked, striving to be calm. "Is it a jest?"

"I would not be so discourteous as to practise a jest upon m'sieur," he said pleasantly.

"I am apparently unable to arise from this chair, which you asked me to sit in."

"So I perceive," he said calmly.

"It is uncomfortable. Will you please release me?"

Before he could answer, the steel door at the end of the room swung open. The four heavy-jowled men I had seen above-stairs in the council-room entered. They came with heavy tread across the cement floor, giving me and Montayne inquiring looks.

The Frenchman made a barely distinguishable sign with his fingers. Then they concentrated their eyes upon me, and each with a dark and lowering gaze.

"Spies!" uttered one gutturally.

Montayne lit a cigarette languidly and nodded. He spoke in German, which I could understand very well, indicating the row of skulls with his hand. "The ninth space from the end, Herr Hansel. You will read the name. The space will soon be filled when the master arrives."

The four men gathered about the spot indicated and exchanged significant remarks. One of them came quite close to me, and, thrusting his jaw out, glared at me. "English pig!" he snarled.

Of course, I was helpless, but the insult so enraged me that I strove to wrench myself from the chair. I had no thought of fear, only hate, bitter hate, for these human fiends. I raged at them, offered to fight them all single-handed if they would set me free. In response they simply stood back and amused themselves by laughing and jeering and hurling vile epithets at me. How I cursed myself for being led into this trap! I knew now that my fate was sealed. It was treachery of the blackest sort. Montayne—if the fellow was really Montayne, and not the true Frochard, after all—had fooled me well.

I gave up all hope, but I felt no fear. I would die as a man ought to die, hurling defiance and hatred at my foes. After a time they grew tired of their abuse and drew away. I saw them conferring at the end of the room. Then they passed out, and Montayne lit another cigarette. He seemed to busy himself with the lock on the door.

I called out angrily: "Coward! Do you call this a fair way of fighting? If there is any part of a man to you you will give me a chance."

Then he walked forward calmly. "M'sieur is excited," he said blandly.

"You treacherous cur!" I hissed.

"There is nothing to fear," he said with a most reassuring manner. "I have no intention of doing you harm."

"Then what is this game of holding me thus in this infernal trap and subjecting me to the insults of those black-hearted scoundrels who have just gone out?"

"M'sieur, they are great men, scientists all."

"So I perceive," I sneered; "to jeer at a helpless man is a truly scientific feat."

"Well, I never thought of that," he said. "It would seem to be so, m'sieur. I am inclined to agree with you."

I paused for sheer lack of breath. His attitude was exasperating beyond endurance. If only he would show anger, even brutality. Instead, he was simply affable, unconcerned and unmoved. I gnashed my teeth.

"But, m'sieur," he said at length, flicking the ashes from his cigarette, "you must give me credit for having betrayed to you the secrets of this league. That in itself is an honor."

"For which I am to pay with my life."

"Ah, how could it be otherwise? You would not take the members of this league to be fools, would you?"

I could find no answer. "To show you how considerately you are to be treated," he said coolly, "in a very short time, perhaps in a few moments, you shall be accorded a great pleasure. With your own eyes you shall soon look upon that which you, I know, hold even dearer than life."

For a moment I tried to grasp his meaning. I saw that he was purposely tantalizing me and that I was foolish to

give him further opportunity. Yet I said: As you choose to speak in riddles, I must remain in the dark."

Before he could say more, the same tiny bell tinkled that I had heard before. He sprang up instantly with an odd light in his eyes. The next moment I beheld that which caused my heart to almost stand still and drove the blood in a mad pressure to my overtaxed brain.

The steel door opened and into the place, like one in a trance, with eyes wide but expressionless, and her lovely face pale and immobile, walked she, who was, as Montayne had truly said, dearer to me than life. Behind her stalked that hateful, deadly figure in gray, with the baleful eyes and the mien of Le Diable himself.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I STRAINED at my steel bonds, trying vainly to break them. I felt the veins swelling to bursting in my temples. It was the most dreadful moment of my life. We were helpless in the hands of these people—she and I. I hoped that she would gaze at me that I might welcome an answering gleam of love and light in her wonderful eyes; but she seemed not to see me, or to be conscious of aught about her.

Then I understood. She was under the hypnotic spell, and I unable to help her. I could only fix my gaze hopelessly, yet yearningly, upon her. To think so fair and pure a creature should be defiled by even the gaze of so vile a wretch. And she was his—to do as he pleased with. It crazed me.

Then I saw him flash a glance at Montayne—a glance of approval and understanding. He then looked at me. I felt that withering, deadening gaze as I had felt it once before. This time, though, I was overjoyed to realize that it did not overpower me. Something rose within me to resist it. I met his gaze with intensity. I gave hate for hate, with defiance added. He walked slowly toward me, concentrating his gaze all the while. I could have laughed with scorn.

"Well done, M'sieur Frochard," he rumbled in his sepulchral voice; "you have one of the rats trapped. It is well."

He jerked his head toward the row of skulls and showed his teeth. Then he rubbed his hands with a mirthless laugh. "We shall soon have his mate," he went on; "then to go on with our great work. *Gott und der Kaiser! Deutschland ueber Alles!*"

Steadily and apparently baffled he glared at me, slowly realizing that I failed to yield. He came closer. How I longed for the use of my fingers to throttle him!

"You have nothing to say," he taunted, indicating Arline with a gesture.

"Yes," I said clearly; "let me out of this chair and I will kill you as I would a snake."

"Where is your strength?" he jeered. "Why not use it?"

I made no reply, and, apparently satisfied, he turned away and pointed to another chair on the other side of the room. Arline walked slowly to it and sat down. In an instant steel clamps flew up and imprisoned her in the same manner as myself.

Montayne had strolled toward the door, lighting another cigarette. I saw him stoop and adjust the lock. The key he removed and thrust into his pocket.

The Spectre straightened and looked at him curiously. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Merely a precaution, m'sieur," he said calmly. "We do not wish to be disturbed in our little affair. *Oui*, m'sieur!"

"Oh," chuckled Von Strechler, and he cast aside his hat and ran his fingers up through his mop of gray hair, "it is well. You are more thoughtful than I, Frochard. Now, what shall it be? I will deal with our detective friend here first. I have a fine cure for love in this little vial."

He took up one of the test tubes and held it up to the light a moment. He toyed with it and then laughed:

"This shall be it. A subcutaneous injection will produce strange results. In exactly forty minutes the flesh drops from the bones and the skeleton will be as clean as bones picked by buzzards. Wait, there must be a witness."

He turned and walked over to Arline. He raised his hand and passed it twice over her face. With a start her lovely face quivered, light came into her eyes and she swept a questioning, frightened glance about. Then she shrank back with a cry of terror. I strained at my bonds frantically.

"Oh, where am I?" she moaned. "And papa is dead; they killed him."

Then she swooned. It seemed that this had not been expected by Von Strechler, for he gave a hasty exclamation and again made passes over her face. She came back slowly, and this time she did not show fear or weakness. Instead, she sat up straighter and gazed at her captor coldly, haughtily.

He rubbed his hands. "That is better," he droned. "now we shall see. Behold!"—and he pointed toward me—"you shall see what a wonderful thing is chemistry."

He walked to the cabinet and picked up the germ tube. I saw him extricate a hypodermic syringe from its case. What ordinarily would have caused me horror did not rouse a pang. I was looking full into her eyes and she into mine. Words were not necessary. We understood each other, and that death with that knowledge would only be a sweet fate, after all.

Montayne had gone again to the door and seemed to be listening. "Master," he said, "I hear voices."

Von Strechler paused with a flash of anger in his eyes. "No visitors are to be admitted," he snarled.

"Ah, master, but they are loud and there is something wrong."

What sounded like the distant report of a pistol came to our hearing plainly. There was another and another. Then a distant crash.

In a moment Von Strechler sprang to a speaking-tube on the wall. What he heard through it we could not tell, but he leaped back with a snarling, animal-like cry. "There is treachery!" he hissed. "Frochard, hold that door." Then he turned to Arline. "You see," he said, holding up the tube, "this is for your lover, unless you accept my offer. You are to promise to be mine, for you are mine already. But I want your promise, sweet *fräulein*."

"You are the murderer of my father!" she panted. I could see that she was trying to gain time.

"Not me," and he looked at her with a terrible smile; "he brought it upon himself. I made him what he was—a rich man. I asked but little in return and he scorned me, even as you have."

"You would not want to marry me," she said with spirit, "for I would kill you."

"I am not afraid of that," and he thrust his cavaderous face close to hers. "I have no time to debate with you, *fräulein*. Is it to be, or not? Remember, his fate will be yours, if you refuse."

"I refuse," she said tensely.

He turned and came toward me, mumbling and grinning like a devil. "It will not pain you—the injection, Herr Onslow. Just a twinge, that is all. But afterward—ah, that is it—afterward."

I believed my fate was sealed. I tried to fasten my last gaze upon Arline, but he was between us. Nearer he came.

Then I saw that Frochard had come up behind the fiend. With a swift motion of his hand, he dashed the tube from the chemist's grasp. It flashed to the cement floor with a crash.

Von Strechler whirled like a panther, only to look into Frochard's eyes. For a full instant he looked, and then slowly drew back. "Traitor!" he hissed.

"I couldn't see it done, m'sieur, really," said Frochard languidly, preparing to light another cigarette. "It is to the bad I am, to be sure, but not—not that."

He pointed to the tube on the floor.

"Are you mad, or are you a fool?" snarled the chemist. "Do you know what you have done?"

Frochard shrugged his shoulders. "M'sieur has seen," he said.

"You have signed your death-warrant."

Von Strechler tried to clutch a glass jar filled with a

bluish fluid from the shelf, but Frochard, with a lightning upward movement of his foot, kicked it from his grasp. It was reduced to fragments on the cement floor, where it instantly formed a cavity in the cement, proving that it was some terrible vitriolic compound. Von Strechler leaped backward to reach his work-bench, but Frochard shot forward like a springing tiger and closed with him. The next moment I was witnessing helplessly the most awful and sanguine personal conflict between man and man that, I firmly believe, ever happened on earth.

Von Strechler had the sinews and the agility of a panther. He fought with only murder in his breast. The other man, however, fought coolly and apparently not to kill, but to conquer. Around and around the place they whirled, grappling and falling and striking and rolling over and up onto their feet again. The great table, with its retorts and its test tubes, was a wreck. The floor was smeared with chemicals, the air reeked with their stench. Two of the lights were smashed, leaving only one to yield a dim glow. Through the shadows they continued to reel and whirl. The Spectre snarled and snapped like a beast. It made me think of Smithson's description of his experience on the *Volturnia*. It was a parallel combat.

I was unable to see who was having the best of it. I could not pray for the success of either, yet I felt somehow that more mercy might be expected from Frochard. So I hoped that he would win.

The light was now dim. I could only faintly distinguish Arline. I could imagine her thoughts were the same as mine. Of what difference was it; neither of us could hope to go from that place alive.

Then there was a great crash and an instant of silence. "Ah, you devil, I have got you now. No more dead men's bones, no more smell of the tomb, no more specters. Faugh!"

A figure arose from the shadows. I felt instinctively that it was not Von Strechler. A moment later the figure came straggling out of the corner, leaving behind a huddled heap of humanity on the floor. The figure came toward me and bent over me. I heard a snap and felt the clamps on the chair relax, and I was free. I bounded to my feet and faced Frochard.

But, no! Even as I stared at the figure before me in the clearer light I saw that it was not the Frenchman. The goatee was gone, the wavy mop of black hair. He was half-stripped to the waist from the effects of the conflict, and I was electrified to see that while his face and neck were an olive hue, his chest and shoulders were white as milk. Then I heard a familiar laugh.

"Quite a scrap, Onnie. I thought he had me once. I took a chance. Might have had him yesterday, but I wanted to trap the fox in his den."

A great cry welled up from the very depth of my being as the mighty truth came crashing in upon me and made all that had hitherto been mystery absolutely clear.

"Walton! My God, it is Walton!"

"Why, of course, Thad, but don't make such a fuss about it. I say, let me find a coat. I'm not presentable to the lady, you know."

The same old imperturbable, devil-may-care Walton. In a moment he had found a jacket, which he donned, and then released Arline. My first act was to clasp her in my arms, and she did not resist.

"Then, Walton, you dog," I cried, "you were aboard the steamer all the while. You were Frochard, and——"

"Why, of course. But what of that?" he said testily. "Speaks well for your powers of penetration, Onnie, that you didn't probe my disguise."

"But it speaks better for your cleverness at make-up," I retorted.

"Of that enough," he said. "We landed the game, all right."

"You landed it," I interposed. "My share was extremely feeble."

"To the contrary, you played up to the part just as I expected and wanted you to. Now, Onnie, this is no time for postmortems. I have only to say that United States Secret Service men have possession of the upper half of this house, and they are waiting for me."

"But"—and I indicated the huddled heap in the corner —"is he dead?"

"Dead? Good Lord, no! I've got him trussed up—handcuffed on wrists and ankles. The Spectre is laid, Onnie, and"—he turned with a low and respectful bow to her who clung to my arm—"you need no longer shun the lady with the pheasant wing on her hat," and he laughed immoderately.

With my whole being swelling with emotion, I bent down and asked her: "Will you go from here with me?"

"I have no one else to go with," she said in a low tone and looked into my eyes.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FEW of the incidents I have related, especially those which occurred at the spies' headquarters, got into the newspapers, for reasons known to government officials. The capture of Von Strechler was told in a paragraph. To those of us on the inside, the full revelations were of interest. It became known then how the important papers were stolen from the English Ambassador's safe at the Embassy at Washington. Von Strechler, as has been told, made several visits there for letters.

On one of these visits, as he expected, he found the under-secretary alone. Von Strechler was a superhypnotist possessed of the power of obliterating memory. The under-secretary could only remember that the man had looked at him in a peculiar way and that he had felt a bit dizzy and ill. Of the lapse of time he had no recollection, thinking that his dizziness was only momentary. Yet, in that period he had gone to the safe, taken out the papers and given them to Von Strechler without knowing it. No doubt his double appearances were all due to disguising in the way he fooled me.

The great German chemist's history was an interesting one and furnished only further evidence of the sad result of the perversion of a wonderful personality and brain, which, if it had been devoted to a better cause, would have done much for humanity. It was admitted by every Secret Service official that Von Strechler was undoubtedly the most gifted criminal of modern times. His undoing broke up the most extensive international spy system that was ever in existence.

As he properly belonged to England, justice was meted out to him there instead of in America. He was dealt with, of course, summarily by English law, which was doubtless the firing-squad and a grave of quicklime. His removal, however, was for the safety and interest of society in all countries, for the world never harbored a more resourceful or dangerous criminal.

The explanation of his appearance on the *Volturnia* is simple, and I attribute it to my lack of a keen, perceptive faculty that I did not fathom it. Walton, in his character of Frochard, of course, knew that Prince Vassilovitch was The Spectre in disguise. And there you are.

In closing my narrative, I will speak of my last memorable tilt—friendly, of course—with Walton. I had decided that nature had not blessed me with the proper talents for success in the detective profession. He listened to me quietly.

"You're a hundred-to-one-shot, Onnie," he said; "better stick. I sort of need you."

"Sorry, Tobias, but my mind is made up."

"Of course," and he elevated his stogie a little, "it's that pheasant wing that did it. It has removed a valuable man from a useful sphere."

"Quit your joshing," I laughed.

The next week I went to Montana, but not alone. You can guess the rest. Smithson and I are hard at work developing our mining property, and Mrs. Thaddeus Onslow is—very well, thank you.

THE MYSTERY OF MELTON

By WILL N. HARBEN

THE inhabitants of the village of Melton, at the time of his burial, little dreamt that the death of the younger son of the Widow Woodruff would later be associated with one of the deepest mysteries ever known.

Five years afterwards, Henry Woodruff, the only son of the widow, went to New York to make some purchases for himself and his mother, intending to spend the night in the city and return to Melton the next day. He had engaged a room at a private hotel on Broadway, eaten his dinner, and gone to see "As You Like It" at the theater.

During the last intermission before the end of the play, he left his seat and went for a stroll in the foyer. He was admiring the portraits of celebrated players on the walls when, turning suddenly, he found himself face to face with a young man whose appearance drove the blood from his face and turned him faint with horror.

The stranger seemed to notice his agitation, paused and eyed him curiously for an instant.

"What is the matter, my man?" he asked kindly; "are you ill?"

Henry shuddered at the sound of his voice and continued to stare speechlessly.

The stranger took a step nearer to him.

"You seem startled at seeing me," he said. "May I ask why you seem so disturbed?"

Henry drew himself up and made an effort to control his voice.

"I beg your pardon," he answered. "But five years ago I lost a brother, and you are exactly like him in every way, even your voice is the same as his. I can't make out what it means. I—I am really afraid something is wrong with me."

The face of the stranger had grown grave. He looked at Henry steadily for a moment, waiting for a group of people to pass into the theater; then he said in quite a different tone:

"I must say you do look like me; in fact, there is a most striking resemblance, but I hardly know what to say to you. If you are not sincere, you certainly look so. I—I really don't think we ought to part without a chance of meeting again. May I ask your name?"

"Henry Woodruff."

"Where do you live?"

"At Melton."

The music was ending. The footlights had flashed the signal for the curtain to rise. The loiterers in the foyer were hurrying into the theater. The stranger seemed to hesitate as he glanced at the step leading down to the street.

"Look here," he said finally. "I dislike to be taken in as much as anybody, but I may as well confess that I am interested in what you say—indeed, very interested. I can't just now explain why. You see, I can't act wholly for myself in such an emergency as this, for I have promised my attorney never, under any circumstances, to enter into conversation on this subject without first consulting him, and he has a right under our agreement to hold me to it. I think we had better separate now, but if you are sincere in what you say, will give me your address, and will agree to see him to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, he will call on you. I promise you that."

In great agitation, and hardly knowing what he was doing, Henry gave him his card.

"I shall wait for him," he said. "But I hardly understand why you——"

"He will talk it all over with you," interrupted the young man. "We have been troubled by so many impostors of late, that we are obliged to be cautious. Somehow I feel that you are not one of that sort, you know, and yet I must keep my agreement with my lawyer. I am not going to wait for the rest of the play. Good-night."

After Henry had watched the young man leave the theater and step into a handsome private automobile at the door, he sank into a seat in the foyer. He was so weak that he could hardly stand, and his mind was in a dazed condition. He sat there, his eyes on the carpet, wondering if he were going mad till the doors were thrown open and the crowd began to rush out.

All that night he did not close his eyes. Time after time he threw himself on his bed and tried to shut out the weird ideas that thronged his brain, but sleep would not come to him. By sunrise he was out of his room pacing the corridors of the hotel. As soon as the café was opened he went in to breakfast, but could not eat anything, and only drank a cup of coffee.

At ten o'clock, as he was waiting in his room, a servant brought up a card bearing the name of J. B. Larabee.

"Show him up here," ordered Henry, and a moment later a little old man with a white fringe to a smooth bald head came in bowing suavely.

"Good-morning, Mr.—Mr. Woodruff," he said, looking at Henry's card in his hand. "I have, as you may know, called at the suggestion of my client, Mr. Raymond Russell, whom it seems you met at the play last night. Now, please be brief and to the point. Tell me plainly what your claim is. We listen to them all, you know."

"Claim?" repeated Henry, as the lawyer seated himself near a window and crossed his fat legs. "I—I don't understand you. I have no claim to make. I was simply so bewildered by the strange resemblance of this Mr. Russell to a brother of mine, who died five years ago, that I could not act calmly at the moment I met him. Even now, I am so upset that——"

"Dead? Did you say he died?" gasped Larabee; "well, that certainly let's us out of the matter. My client surely is not a dead man."

"Let's you out of what?" asked Henry perplexedly.

The lawyer stared fixedly at Henry for a moment, then a puzzled expression captured his face and his eyes fell.

"I'm sorry, but I can't go into details with you. My client has to be very cautious in dealing with strangers. We have been overrun with all sorts of claims of relationship. Some of them have cost us a good deal of money and trouble to fight. You, of course, know who my client is."

"I never heard of him before, nor saw him till last night."

"Then you don't claim him to be your brother?"

"How could I? My brother has been dead five years."

The lawyer's eyes widened. He shrugged his shoulders and pulled at his mustache.

"Look here," he said finally. "If you are a designing person, you certainly take me in. To tell the truth, you do resemble Mr. Russell strongly, and I want to go deeper into the matter, if you have no objections. My client is waiting for me downstairs; let me call him up."

The lawyer went downstairs, and in a moment returned with the young man Henry had met at the theater.

"Good-morning, Mr. Woodruff," he said pleasantly; "you see we have promptly followed you up. In all other cases, I assure you, we have been the ones pursued. If Mr. Woodruff is not sincere, he is certainly original in his methods, don't you think so, Larabee?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the lawyer, "and the strangest part of it all is that he makes no claim of any kind. He says the brother you look so much like died five years ago."

"What!" cried Russell, "surely—why, you said you lost him, and it was that which caused me to imagine——"

"Not so fast; no explanations, please," said Larabee, with a warning glance at the speaker. "Mr. Woodruff, of course, meant to refer to his brother's death. The expression is often used. But what I want to understand, my boy, is the remarkable resemblance you bear to Mr. Woodruff, and, moreover, your voices sound alike, if I am any judge."

She stared, uttered a frightened scream, dropped the letters, and fell into hysterics on the sidewalk.

"The resemblance struck me last evening," replied Russell. Suddenly Larabee had an idea.

"Do you, Mr. Woodruff," he said, "happen to know of any birthmark on your brother?"

Henry started.

"Yes," he said quickly. "He had a red irregular mark on his right shoulder, about the size of a silver dollar."

"By Jove! I have that mark!" exclaimed Russell, bending breathlessly towards Larabee.

With a warning glance at him Larabee said:

"You know, Russell, the papers mentioned that fact. On second thought, we could not take that into consideration." He turned to Henry and in the wily tone of an experienced cross-questioner, he asked: "Do you happen to remember any other mark on your brother's person which would distinguish him from any one else?"

Henry reflected a moment, then he said:

"He had a scar on his foot—the left one I think, exactly across the instep. It was made with a hatchet when we were boys, but at the time of his death it had grown very indistinct, I think."

"Have you any such scar?" asked Larabee, turning to his client.

"I really don't know," answered Russell with some embarrassment.

"Suppose you see if you have; it seems very foolish, but it can do no harm, and it may remove any doubt."

Russell took off his shoe and stocking and looked at his foot closely. "By heavens, here it is!" he cried. "I did not know myself that it was there. What in thunder does it all mean? I——"

He paused abruptly as his glance fell on Henry, who had turned to a sickly yellow, and leaned forward as if he were about to faint. Larabee sprang for a glass of water and gave it to Henry, and then, as he drank it, dead silence filled the room. Russell broke the stillness. He put on his stocking and shoe and sprang to his feet.

"Look here, Larabee!" he said sternly. "I want this matter sifted to the bottom. I am getting tired of your eternal caution, and suspecting every one of fraud. You understand, you'll have to take this up in earnest, or I shall call in a detective."

Larabee suddenly flushed under his look of perpexity.

"I will do all I can," he said. "I am as much interested in getting at the truth as you are. But, to save me, I don't know where to begin. Woodruff's brother is dead."

"Was he buried?" asked Russell of Henry, who had slightly revived and was listening eagerly.

"Yes."

"Did you see it yourself?"

"Yes, and a hundred others saw it."

"Did he live at Melton when he died?"

"Yes."

"Then there might be people there now who would notice the resemblance between me and your brother."

"I don't see how they could fail to do so. Most of them knew him, and my mother is still there."

Russell turned to the lawyer.

"I want to go to Melton with Mr. Woodruff at once," he said.

Larabee looked at his watch.

"We can start in fifteen minutes, if it will suit you, Mr. Woodruff."

"I am ready," replied Henry, shuddering at the thought of the sensation in store for his mother and his friends,

and yet feeling that it would be a great relief to have the advice of some one he knew.

"Would I have time to send a telegram to my mother?" Henry asked, as they were alighting from a car at the station.

"I'd rather you would not send it," returned Larabee. "It would be better for no one at Melton to be apprised of our coming."

"I see," said Henry. "And you are right, of course."

By twelve o'clock they were at Melton. To reach Mrs. Woodruff's cottage it was necessary to traverse a street along which were situated the principal shops of the place. The first noteworthy happening occurred as they were passing the post-office.

An old woman who was an intimate friend of the Woodruff family, and had known Joseph from infancy to the day of his death, was coming out of the office, a bundle of letters in her hand, when she suddenly came face to face with Russell. She stared, uttered a frightened scream, and fell into hysterics on the sidewalk.

"By Jove!" whispered Larabee to his client. "If this is not real it is superb acting," and he bent forward to assist Henry to raise the woman to her feet. Some one brought a chair, and she was placed upon it. Henry tried to pacify her, but every time she caught sight of the face of Russell she burst out weeping and begged them to take him away. A crowd gathered quickly, and as different old friends of Joseph Woodruff came and saw Russell, attention was at once riveted on him.

Hardly knowing what he was doing, Henry left the old woman in the care of friends and started on with Larabee and Russell toward his mothers' house. The crowd followed silently, gathering awed and astonished members from every yard and doorway.

Scarcely a word was spoken by any one till they were within half a block of the Woodruff cottage. Seeing his mother in the front yard among her flowers, Henry paused abruptly.

"My mother suspects nothing of this," he said to Larabee. "Our sudden coming may do her a serious injury. Had I not better go ahead and prepare her for it in a measure?"

Larabee showed that he was more determined to be cautious than ever. "No," he said firmly. "So far everything has been conducted in a manner perfectly satisfactory to our side. Pardon me, but if you will allow me, I will go ahead and tell her to be prepared for a striking resemblance to her son that is dead."

"Go ahead then," consented Henry.

The crowd, which seemed awed into silence by the presence of Russell, remained where they were. They saw Larabee approach Mrs. Woodruff and enter into conversation with her, then Henry and Mr. Russell moved on toward them.

As they drew near, Mrs. Woodruff, trembling with excitement, came out of the gate onto the sidewalk. The instant her eyes singled Russell out of the crowd she screamed, and then stood as if transfixed, her eyes dilating.

"He is my son," she said, in a low, husky tone, and then her voice rose in a quavering cry: "Henry, it's Joseph! Don't you see him? Oh, my God, what does it mean?"

Russell was very pale, and seemed deeply touched. He advanced and took the hand of the old woman.

"If you are my mother, good woman," he said gently, "I don't know it. I should like to believe it, for you are good and kind, but if your son is dead there must be some mistake."

"The grave, Henry," suggested an excited villager; "that may show something. Perhaps there is no body there."

"Open it, Wellman, and do it at once," said Henry, with pale, determined face.

"The grave, boys!" cried Wellman. "Get picks and spades!"

The crowd scattered in all directions, and in five minutes had reassembled in the little graveyard on the hillside behind the cottage. Larabee and Russell were among the first at the grave. Henry supported his mother into the cottage, and persuaded her not to be present at the opening of the grave, but as soon as he could leave her he joined the crowd on the hillside. He found half a dozen villagers digging and shoveling like madmen. Pretty soon he heard the tools striking hollowly upon the coffin. A few minutes later the spectators surged back breathlessly as the coffin emerged from the hole on the shoulders of two men.

"It's pretty heavy," remarked the village undertaker, as he began to unscrew the fastenings, "but it may have water in it. It's a wet grave."

Henry elbowed his way through the crowd to the coffin, finding himself next to Larabee and Russell. The next minute the undertaker removed the coffin lid.

In the bottom lay a skeleton and the brown traces of a shroud which had evidently once been white.

"Put it back and cover it up," gasped Henry, as he pushed through the crowd. "I am satisfied, and have had enough of it all."

He was followed quickly by Larabee and his client. The lawyer caught Henry's arm as he was hastening toward the cottage.

"Mr. Russell and I are going back on the first train," he said. "A muddle like this is not good for any of us. You see how unstrung Mr. Russell is. This is apt to get into the papers, but you will do us a favor if you will not mention our names to correspondents or reporters; they will be sure to try to interview you. If you desire to see us again, write to this address," and giving Henry a card he drew Russell away.

The next day the metropolitan papers were full of the remarkable occurrence at Melton, and sensational reports of the meeting at the theater between Henry Woodruff and the stranger who resembled his dead brother, and whose name it had been impossible for the reporters to ascertain from Henry Woodruff or any one else.

Next morning Henry received a letter from Larabee. He wrote:

"DEAR MR. WOODRUFF—Both Mr. Russell and myself highly appreciate your consideration in not giving our names to the reporters, and feel that we owe you a sort of explanation since you do not seem to know anything about my client. He has had a very remarkable history. Five years ago last August he was found at daybreak by a policeman in a doorway in a little street near the Bowery. He was unconscious, had not a particle of clothing on, and his body was cut from head to foot with broken glass.

"The policeman tried to rouse him, but failing, summoned an ambulance and had him conveyed to the nearest hospital. For about three days Mr. Russell knew nothing, but having the best medical attention, he soon began to recover.

"His strange case, and the fact that no one came to recognize him, interested several well-known doctors, and this interest was deepened when it was found that, although naturally very intelligent, Mr. Russell could not recall his name, nor anything about his past.

"Dr. Raymond Russell, the millionaire physician, was attending him, and took so much interest in him that he had the young man removed to his home on the Hudson, and gave him the best advantages of education. The young man advanced most rapidly in his studies, but was

never able to recall any part of his life prior to his recovery.

"Finally, after all hope had been given up of ever finding the young man's relatives, Dr. Russell formally adopted him. Two years later the old man died, and it was found that he had left his entire fortune to his adopted son. Since that fact was made public, my client's strange history has been revived in the newspapers, and he encountered so many adroit schemes of impostors claiming relationship to him that he employed me to advise him. The night he met you at the play he came to me greatly agitated, declaring that you must be his brother on account of your striking resemblance to him and your earnestness.

"We are deeply interested in all that happened at Melton and perplexed by it. We cannot believe that you can be otherwise than sincere, and Mr. Russell's sympathy for your mother has been so worked up that he can speak of nothing but her agitation and grief the other day.

"However, nothing further can be done. Your brother is dead and we have seen his remains. Mr. Russell certainly resembles you and your mother, and the marks on his person make the mystery deeper than ever. The best surgeon in New York has just told us that the scar on Mr. Russell's foot must have been made in childhood, and with the edge of a hatchet. For the present, at least, please keep our names from the press. If we were known to be the men you met in New York, as mentioned in the papers, the whole of Mr. Russell's history would be again dragged before the public, which would do no good and only pain him. Hoping that by this time your mother has recovered from the trying events of yesterday, I am

"Faithfully yours,

"J. B. LARABEE."

The next morning the *Herald* published the following communication, and Henry Woodruff read it to his mother at the breakfast-table:

"EDITOR HERALD—I beg the use of your columns for an important purpose. I would address myself to the proper parties, but I don't know whom to write to. But as you seem somewhat interested in that excitement down at Melton the other day, I thought you might be glad to have some light on the subject. I am not going to sign my name to this letter, as my business is not exactly lawful and I am not going to get myself into a fix, but you may believe what I say or not, just as it suits you."

"That racket down at Melton has mixed me up so that I hardly know how to tell a straight story. When I read about the people in the village opening the grave of Joseph Woodruff to see if the dead had risen or not my blood ran cold, for me and one other man, my partner in the business of furnishing bodies to medical people, are the only ones who know the key to the mystery.

"To make a long story short, the bones found in the coffin were not the remains of Joseph Woodruff. Me and my partner happened to be at Melton looking out for something in our line, when he saw Joseph Woodruff buried. The sun had hardly set, for it was a dark day, before we began to work, and as the dirt was loose, we soon had the coffin up and open. Now, it happened that we had a body in our possession which was so far gone that we could not take it to New York without detection, and so we put it into the coffin and buried it to get rid of it. That's how the bones came there, but as to the rest of the mystery I am in the dark as much as any one else.

"Here is all that happened afterward—to my knowledge. We took the body right away to a doctor in New York. We got our price for it, and so, even if I could remember the fellow's name, I wouldn't blow on him. He was dressed for the evening when we arrived, and seemed in a hurry. He told us to lay the body out on his dissecting-table, and locked the door of the room when we had done so and hurried away to some entertainment.

"Now here is something of a rather surprising nature. The next morning I got a message from the doctor to come around. I never saw a madder man. He said he had been delayed in a most important examination by the sudden disappearance of the body we had brought. He seemed to suspect us of stealing it to sell to some one else, but, when I swore up and down that we never thought of such a thing he became very serious, took me into the dissecting-room and showed me that a window which opened onto the back stoop had been smashed into flinders, and that drops of blood could be seen on the floor of the room and on the wall leading to the rear alley.

"I offered to procure him another body, but he seemed frightened a little and would not do it. He said he had come to the conclusion that some medical students had stolen the body for a joke, but that such pranks might lead to exposure to the police.

"Now that's all I know about the matter. I have a theory about the whole thing, but I don't suppose the public wants any theories from an anonymous writer, so I shan't say any more."

Henry handed the paper to his mother. Her face paled as she glanced over it.

"It is Joseph!" she gasped. "He is not dead! I see it all now! I have never felt easy about him! I have dreamt a thousand times that he was alive!"

She ran to the door and looked toward the station.

"They are coming," she cried excitedly. "I see them down the street!"

Henry followed her to the gate. It was Larabee and his client.

"You are indeed my mother," was the warm greeting of the latter, as he took the old woman into his arms. "Larabee will tell you all about it."

"The dead has really come to life," said Larabee. "The anonymous letter in the *Herald* did the work. One of the best known physicians has just owned up to his part of the transaction. He is positive that the body brought to him was your son, Mrs. Woodruff. Of course, he won't be prosecuted for buying a live man and thus saving his life. He thinks the young man came to, and finding himself imprisoned in the dissecting-room he broke out of the window, and started on his unconscious wanderings at such an early hour that he was not seen till discovered by the policeman."

GERMAN SOLDIERS ARE SUPERSTITIOUS

THE soldiers of the Kaiser are very superstitious, from the men in the ranks up to the Crown Prince. Wilhelm's eldest son carries a horseshoe with him on all his motor trips and spends most of the day in his motor car. The horseshoe is attached to one of the doors of the car, and when being photographed in his motor car the prince always insists on the photographer "taking" the side of the car with the horseshoe.

The soldiers of Württemberg pin their faith upon a little bag containing the dry pollen of flowers, which they believe has the power of warding off the bullets. The Saxons sew into the lining of their waistcoats the wings of a bat and think themselves to be invincible. The Bavarians hold on tenaciously to a still more bizarre custom. Before going into battle each soldier finds a birch tree, cuts his skin, and lets a few drops of blood fall upon the tree. This ceremony, they assert, assures recovery, when the leaves begin to grow again.

HAVING HIS WAY

By JOHN HABBERTON, author of *"Helen's Babies," etc.*

ARTHUR WHITEWAY had always had his own way about everything. He was an only son, so his parents made him their idol; he was born rich, so all his acquaintances deferred to him. At college he spent money freely, and was the strongest and best-natured man of the athletic set, so he became leader of his class. As with his money he had also good looks and good manners, he was allowed to have his way in any social set he entered.

It was therefore quite natural that when his mind took a serious turn, and he began life in the larger world as minister of a church in the dead-and-alive village of Outway, he imagined that he would continue to have his own way with everything and every one, Satan included. He succeeded quite well, too, for a time. All the young women who were not theologically bound elsewhere attended his church, for the Reverend Arthur was said to have been disappointed in love and to have vowed never to marry—two statements that will make any well-appearing young man extremely interesting to the gentler sex. Still more, he wore good clothes, not of clerical cut, every day of the week, shaved daily and carried himself well—facts which made him very unlike the young men of Outway.

Where young women congregate, there will the young men go, even if the place be a church; besides, the Reverend Arthur was so unlike other ministers that he made an evening clubhouse of his rooms, told the young men more funny stories than they had ever heard before, taught them all he had learned of boxing, fencing and other manly sports, and never "talked shop" at unseasonable times. He spent a lot of his own money in trying to pull some of the town drunkards into shape, he thrashed a couple of aggressive ruffians from elsewhere who had overawed the town constable, and he took such unselfish and persistent interest in village affairs that the natives cheerfully allowed him his own way about everything he wished to do.

In the early spring, however, while the Reverend Arthur was preparing for a special effort to gather a number of souls into his church, Satan suddenly came to town in the guise of an angel of light. To be specific, old Jim Widstrow's young widow came to Outway to live. She would not have done it if could she have helped it, for she had been brought up in a large city, and was only twenty-five, and wildly fond of fun and appreciation. Old Jim, twice a widower, had inherited half a million from a distant relative two years before, and the money had made a fool of him and sent him to the city, where he endeavored to play the gentleman. He fell in love with a charming woman, who married him for his money—her mother and friends advised her to do it, and the old husband soon saw his mistake and drank himself to death. He took a cruel revenge, however, for some weeks before dying he gave all of his money to a charitable institution on condition that it should pay his widow ten thousand a year so long, but only so long, as she might reside continuously in his old house at Outway, and dress only in black.

The conditions were dreadful, but not so the ten thousand dollars to a young woman who had nothing but her beauty and her spirits; so after about a year of formal mourning in the city, the pretty widow went to Outway to see if she could endure it long enough to accumulate some money with which to live elsewhere until a satisfactory suitor might come her way. She shocked the town, which knew the conditions imposed by old Jim; for although her garb was black, the fashion and materials of it were in keeping with a superb figure and a lively manner. She soon banished to the barn all the furniture of the old house, replacing it with inexpensive yet tasteful things from the city, and when her piano was heard through the open windows, the music was far livelier than any played by other widows in Outway—livelier, indeed, than any that had been heard in the village since the last minstrel troupe departed.

She made haste to become acquainted with the cleverer young women of the village; some of these were at first reluctant, but when it became known that the handsome young widow had half a dozen trunks full of costly dresses which old Jim had given her with the hope of coaxing her to love him a little—dresses which she would never again be able to wear, and which she would gladly give away to girls who might care for them and who could get into them—the reluctance melted like June snowflakes; the girls declared Mrs. Widstrow to be the best-hearted creature that ever existed, and that the poor abused thing should not have a lonesome moment in the old house if they could help it.

But some women talked otherwise—women who were not young, or who failed to get any of the superfluous dresses. They said that no such kind of person had ever before been seen in Outway. To this extent they were right, as every one who met the widow on the street or in the shops admitted, for the new-comer was always daintily, almost dashingly, dressed, bright-eyed, alert, given to laughter on the least provocation, and looking and acting always as if she were continually longing for excitement of some kind.

Still, she went to church every Sunday, and behaved as decorously as any other member of the congregation, although her little black bonnets were so pretty that they detracted much attention from the service. She regularly dropped a dollar into the plate, and gave far more liberally when there were special collections, so there was much solicitude among the faithful as to which church she would finally attend regularly. She explained that as there was no congregation of her denomination at Outway she was uncertain as to where she could worship permanently. The local pastors—all but the Reverend Arthur—preached their show sermons when she visited their churches, for not one of them had yet been blessed with a parishoner who had ten thousand a year and was free-handed.

For reasons of his own, however, the Reverend Arthur would always change his sermon for the day and deliver something very solemn when he saw Mrs. Widstrow's handsome face looking demurely up at him from a pew not far from the pulpit. He had met her type when he was a man of the world and a connoisseur in women; she had rich red lips and melting brown eyes, and women of her kind had given him some heartaches; he was not

going to have any such nonsense interfere with the serious work to which he was giving his life.

One day old Farmer Pease, who was a member of the Reverend Arthur's church, drove to the parsonage, whistled the minister out to the gate, and remarked:

"Ther's queer goin's on up to old Jim's place. I druv in there to-day to see if the widder didn't want to buy a cow, hearin' she was mighty particular about the kind of milk she uses, an' through the winder I seen—well, I dunno as I ort even to mention such things to a minister, but there was four or five of our village gals, some of 'em as nice as any that's goin', an' church members, too, an' they was laughin' fit to split, an' they had on dresses that would most ha' put your eyes out, an' good for you, too, that they would, 'cause they didn't have no tops to the waists, nor no sleeves to 'em. I've seen pictures of such, but I never s'posed the reel thing would get into Outway. Old Miss Brine, that's doin' the housework, says the widder's tryin' to get the gals used to them sort of togs agin the time when she's goin' to give a party, 'fore long."

The Reverend Arthur frowned; he had attended many parties in other days, and seen eminently respectable young women in low-necked dresses, but city custom justified some things that might shake Outway from center to circumference—especially on the eve of a series of special meetings.

"Somethin' ort to be done about it," continued the farmer, "or them special meetin's you're goin' to hold won't be wuth a hill o' beans."

"Something *shall* be done," said the Reverend Arthur between his teeth. "I'll have my way, or——"

The farmer waited for the remainder of the sentence, but as it did not come, he continued:

"'Tain't so easy to have one's own way with a woman like old Jim's widder. I've seen her kind before—not from the city, but there ain't no diff'rence in the breed; they run all alike. They are the can't-keep-still, don't-know-where-they'll-break-out-next kind, an' whether they wear fine silks or faded calicoes, they're mighty likely to have their way. Good-natured critters, too, as a rule, an' don't mean no harm to nobody, but all the young men fall in love with them, an' that sets all the young women by the ears. Them that I've knowed has kept hull towns by the ears till they got married themselves. 'Pears to me, though, Mrs. Jim might be willin' to hold up a bit just now, if she knowed ther was reasons for us wantin' the town to be in a se'rus frame of mind for a while. Now, you've got a gift o' speech, an' if you was to go out there an' make a minister's call, an' lay the matter before her, I shouldn't wonder——"

"I—er—I think some of the ladies of the congregation could attend to the matter more delicately than I, and I will have it attended to at once," said the young minister. Somehow the ladies of the congregation with one accord began to make excuse when asked to request the mirthful widow to restrain her exuberance until after the week set for the special meetings; the older women did not like to speak to a stranger—and so peculiar a stranger—on such a subject, and the younger women were afraid that they would be laughed at.

"I'll have my way about it, in spite of their half-heartedness," said the Reverend Arthur, and he straightway sought out certain young men who had enjoyed the fair widow's hospitality; but these, when they learned what was wanted, became cowards of the most abject description; the only one who could be persuaded to "think about it" soon became so broke up that he went to bed and remained there a week.

The Reverend Arthur began to feel desperate. He had never before failed at any undertaking, but now he had misgivings. He told himself that, too, was cowardly. Were Mrs. Widstrow a man he would have no hesitation in freeing his mind, but to a woman, and to such a woman, and with such a subject as low-necked dresses to talk about—oh!

While he reasoned with himself, a story went about the village that the lively widow was planning a masquerade party for the very week of the special services. The Reverend Arthur bit his lip until it bled; then he looked in his mirror, snatched his hat and stick, and walked briskly out to the Widstrow place. He resisted a wild desire to pass the gate and once more roll the subject over in his mind, and went up the long garden path with the defiant swing of a soldier in a forlorn hope, he rang the bell, gave his card to old Mrs. Brine, the woman-of-all-work, and waited, it seemed to him, an hour. It really was fifteen minutes before a gentle rustle caused him to rise from his chair to be greeted by a soft voice and warm hand, and to see a remarkably handsome face without a trace of mischief in it. The young man made a hasty, mental note, to the effect that a woman always appears to advantage when playing the hostess in her own house.

"So kind of you to call," murmured the lady, sinking into an easy-chair after begging her visitor to be seated. "I've feared that your church had placed me under the ban."

"Oh, I assure you that I've for some time had it on my mind to call," was the reply.

"How good of you! I've heard so much about you from some new acquaintances I've made—some delightful young people."

"There are indeed some very pleasant young people in Outway," replied the Reverend Arthur, "and I am greatly interested in their welfare."

"Then we have an interest in common," said the lady. "More than that, I can become interested in the older ones, nor can I forgive them for the way they've talked of me. They seem to think that because I'm an old man's widow I ought to settle into the ways of an old woman. That isn't fair, is it?"

The question was asked with the frankest manner imaginable. The Reverend Arthur read faces fairly well, but there was no sign of mischief or compliment-hunting in the eyes that honestly met his.

"It certainly is not fair," the young man replied. "Any woman has the right to the society of persons of her own age and—er—condition."

The lady tapped one little foot audibly with the other while she mused a moment; then she asked:

"Does that mean that I ought to associate specially with young widows?"

"Honestly, yes—at least, to some extent," replied the minister gravely. "Allow me to say that there are some estimable young widows in our community."

"But they're not of my condition," protested Mrs. Widstrow, almost piteously.

"In some ways, no; they've not had your wealth and social advantages, yet they——"

"Oh, Mr. Whiteway, you mistake my meaning. Their hearts were bound up in their husbands, and they—oh, how I envy them! But I—I was married against my will to a man whom I couldn't love, although I tried hard to respect him. I can't even pretend to be sorry that he is gone; it would be hypocritical of me."

"Nevertheless, he was your husband," said the Reverend Arthur, as gently as he could. "All of us ought in

honesty and self-respect to abide by the results of our own acts, and——"

"Own fiddlesticks!" exclaimed the widow, to the visible horror of her visitor, who unconsciously rose to his feet. Mrs. Widstrow also looked horrified as she recovered her self-possession, rose quickly, and with a frank, girlish manner that reminded the young minister of his own sisters, exclaimed: "Oh, forgive me—please do! I didn't mean to say that. Don't go! I can't bear you to think me a brute. I meant to say that it wasn't my own act—marrying Mr. Widstrow wasn't. Please don't set your face that way, as if you didn't believe me, for 'tis the truth. You've never been a woman, or——"

As she paused the lady looked reminiscent, then indignant. Finally she sank into her chair, and closed her eyes as she continued:

"You don't know how some women's friends, even their nearest relations, go on when there is a possibility of a rich marriage. I was teased, coaxed, urged to marry Mr. Widstrow. I didn't want to. I never gave him any encouragement. I know that I did want everything that his money would buy, for I was poor and proud and ambitious; but even after I had given my promise I would have welcomed any excuse to break it. I would have run away with the poorest young man alive—any man whom I could have learned to love. When it was too late I felt desperate and humiliated. To be married, yet not a wife——"

"But you were a wife," began the Reverend Arthur argumentatively. He was sorry—very sorry for the woman whose face seemed all the handsomer for the grief it was expressing, but he was not willingly going to have any one in Outway talk slightingly of the marriage bond; there was too much of that dangerous sort of nonsense in the world. "However much you may regret your marriage, which I am told was painfully unfortunate, you had become a wife, and——"

"But I hadn't!" interrupted the widow, with a flash of her eyes that startled the Reverend Arthur by its earnestness. "I was the head of his house, his queen—his slave, I thought sometimes, but all the while I was my old self—a girl, no more a wife than any single woman of your congregation. If ever a woman was in chains, I was—and I still am. For my own self-respect's sake, I envy the poorest, plainest wife or widow in Outway, for none of them is in such a false position as I am."

"I am very, very sorry for you," ventured the Reverend Arthur cautiously, for although his sense of pity was touched he felt embarrassed. The purpose of his errand was yet to be made known, and he felt less able than before to explain it. He thought rapidly, and suddenly continued: "I know that no words of mine can—er—change your feeling of discomfort, but you may depend upon me for one thing; I shall certainly say, whenever I hear the subject mentioned, that you are entirely right in selecting your companions from among persons of your own age. Perhaps your own experiences may prompt you to warn other young women against ill-advised marriages, to which there are other incentives beside the desire for money; there is the longing for greater freedom, the desire to escape from humdrum lives at home, the——"

"I shall advise girls to live single and die old maids rather than marry until they are sure that they love," said the widow, "and I shall make life so pleasant for a lot of them that they won't be impatient for a change."

"I hope," said the Reverend Arthur desperately, as he recalled the special meetings and the low-necked dresses and the reported masquerade party, "that you will consider all their rights and duties as well as their pleasures. I am doing all in my power to make life more pleasant for young people of my own sex, and I seem to be succeeding. But enjoyment, to be enduring, must be based upon character, and character depends upon religion—I don't mean worship, but on religious principles loyally lived up to. I am about to start a series of meetings with the hope of help many young people to reach this desirable condition; I beg that you will do nothing to lessen the success of this work."

"I? Why, how can I?" murmured the widow, with a wondering look in her great brown eyes.

"You—er—it is reported that you will soon give a great party at which——"

"There will be nothing improper about any entertainment given in my house, Mr. Whiteway," said the lady with an air of injured dignity and a flush which the Reverend Arthur thought wonderfully becoming to her peculiar style of beauty, as he stammered:

"Certainly not—through intention." Oh, those low-necked dresses! How could he tell her what talk and other mischief they would cause in a place where nothing of the sort had ever been seen? Her party must not be given; he must have his way now, more than ever before in his life, and have it he would, regardless of the cost. Rising suddenly, as if to go, he said:

"Those chains of yours, of which you spoke, are cruel—mean—undeserved—brutal. You must be relieved of them, but there is only one way to do it—exchange them for others."

"But how?" The question was looked as well as asked; for answer the Reverend Arthur looked long and ardently down into the brown eyes until they melted; then for the first time in his life Arthur Whiteway embraced and kissed a woman; as to the woman, apparently she encouraged him not to stop. In the course of time, however, his conscience prompted him to slowly drop his arms, and say:

"This has been so unexpected that perhaps you may wish to change your mind."

"No—no—no—I shan't—I'm very sure I can't," whispered the lady, looking up with a face which seemed radiant and arch and timid, all at the same time.

"Very sure—and at notice so short? Why, how can that be?"

"Because——" she hid her face in his breast and continued, "because from the first time I saw you I wished I might be your wife. Was it very, very dreadful of me?"

"Dreadful!" his lips answered at length, though not in words. Yet somehow duty forced its way back to his mind—those low-necked dresses!

"You don't know me," he said. "I'm only a man, and one who has been spoiled, for I've always had my way."

"You shall continue to have it. You shall learn what a woman will do for the man she truly loves."

"Rash girl! I shall put you to the test at once. That party of yours—I shan't ask you not to give it, but don't—I beg of you—I insist—don't let Outway girls wear those low-necked dresses."

The brown eyes filled with wonder, then with merriment, as their owner said:

"How on earth did you—oh, I think village gossip is too mean for anything! You dear, silly fellow, the girls would rather die than wear those dresses as they were. The tops have all been filled in with lace."

"I heerd you'd been out to see Jim's widder," remarked Farmer Pease to his pastor the next day. "Well, did you have your way?"

"Entirely," was the reply. The farmer stared curiously for a moment or two, and drawled:

"Then I reckon she had hern, too. She'll make a rippin' minister's wife. When's the weddin' to be?"

A FIGHTER FROM THE BOWERY

By C. B. LEWIS (M. QUAD)

"WELL, sergeant, what is it?" asked the captain of Company A, as the orderly sergeant entered his tent and saluted.

"Private Harrigan again, sir."

"What is it this time?"

"Refuses duty and has nearly killed his tentmate."

"All right; trot him over here."

It was in the winter of 1864-'65, while Grant's army was infesting Petersburg. Bounty-jumpers and drafted men were coming down in squads almost daily for the different commands, and among the dozen men assigned to Company A one day, two weeks previously, was Private Harrigan. There were handcuffs on his wrists and chains on his ankles as he reached the front, and the officer who turned the squad over to the captain said of them:

"They are all bounty men and the hardest kind of cases, but Harrigan is the worst of all. I wish you luck of him."

"We'll lick him into shape in a few days," replied the captain, as he ordered the prisoner out of irons and assigned him to quarters.

Within twenty-four hours Harrigan had had two fistcuff fights, made an attempt to desert and proclaimed that he would never do an hour's work. When sent for by his captain, he said:

"Ise a fighter, I am—see? Ise come down here to fight and not to work, and youse may kill me before I'll lift pick or spade."

"A fighter, eh?" queried the captain.

"Dat's what I said. I was de toughest man on de Bowery. Ise busted de heads o' more cops dan youse kin count in half an hour. Dey was afraid of me, de hull perlice force of New York, and dey made de bounty fifteen hundred dollars to blow me away. I kin lick any man youse got in de company, and Ise a bad man to joke wid."

"Don't you intend to obey orders?"

"When Ise ordered to fight I'll be right at de head ob de gang. When it's work I won't lift me hand. Don't make no mistake on me, cully."

Private Harrigan had been sent to the guardhouse for refusal to work in the trenches. He had been bucked and gagged for fighting with his comrades. He had been threatened with court-martial for mutiny. The attempt to "lick him into shape" had been a failure.

"Look here, Harrigan," began the captain, as the man appeared before him, in accordance with the orders given to the sergeant, as above, "you were detailed for work on the defenses of Fort Hades."

"I was, sir, and to the devil with your fort," was the prompt reply.

"Haven't the past two weeks taught you that you must obey orders?"

"As I told youse the first day, I tell youse again. Send me up agin the enemy and I'll fight, but as for work, I'll die in me tracks first."

"So you like fighting?"

"That's me ticket, captain; I was born for a fighter. I like it; I'm not afraid of any man on eart'. Send me out wid a musket and you'll find me as good as ten men."

The captain gave the man a good looking over. He noted his square jaw, his bullet-head, his low brow—all the signs of a street fighter. There were no indications of moral courage or of pride or self-respect. It was the head and face of a bulldog humanized. He was a fighter with fists and feet and teeth. Under military law he could have been severely punished, but the officer determined to try an experiment with him. An hour later Private Harrigan flung his musket, knapsack, haversack and canteen into a tent occupied by Private Joe Ford, and followed them to growl:

"It's by de captain's orders dat I'm to put up at dis hotel. Git off dat bed and cook me some dinner."

"Your name is Harrigan?" queried Ford, as he looked at the new arrival.

"Dat's me, cully, and don't forgit to put 'Mister' before it, if youse wants to keep me good-natured. Git a move on yer wheels."

John Ford slowly rose up and dropped his feet to the ground and his tones were quiet and even as he said:

"Harrigan, I want to tell you something. You call yourself tough and you are punching the boys about pretty freely. If you lay a hand on me I'll shoot you so dead you won't have time to kick."

"What's de racket, cully?" asked Harrigan.

"There is no racket. I don't like you. You have been sent here as an experiment. In a day or two I'll show you up as the biggest coward in the regiment. Meanwhile, if you pick a fuss with me I'll kill you like a dog."

Joe Ford was an old veteran. His comrades knew him to be peaceful and good-natured, though a brave man. Harrigan was at first inclined to assault him, but he noticed a steely glitter in the old soldier's eyes and there was something in the quiet tones that spoke of danger. He turned away without a word and began arranging his outfit, and not another word was exchanged between the two men until evening came, and they sat smoking and looking at each other askance. Ford had spoken of an experiment, and had said he would prove Harrigan a coward. The words mystified and rankled.

"Say, old man, what about dat experiment?" asked the man from the Bowery at last.

"We are going to test your courage," was the reply.

"Oh, dat's it? Well, if youse figger dat I hain't got sand in me crop youse will git left. Is de captain goin' to run me up agin three good men to once?"

"You are going down in front of Fort Hades with me."

"Rats! I t'ought it was a scrap. Dat's where dey wanted me to handle de spade and where dem big guns are keepin' up such a racket. What's goin' to happen when we gits dere, cully?"

"You'll show yourself a coward."

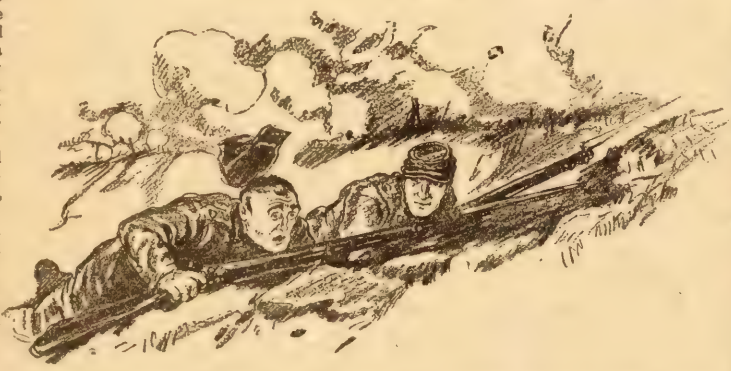
"W-h-a-t!" shouted Harrigan, as he rose up. "Me a coward? I ain't wishin' to quarrel wid youse, old man, but don't rile me up. If dey was shootin' off all de big guns ever made dey couldn't skeer me. If dat's what youse figger on to make me go down in me butes, I'll hev de laff on yer!"

"Wait and see," was the quiet reply, and Joe Ford turned over on his blankets to go to sleep.

Fort Hades was the nearest spot to Lee's lines on that line of investment. It was a strong earthwork thrust out

in a salient from Grant's lines and armed with the heaviest ordnance. Opposite, and only pistol-shot away, was a Confederate fort of less strength, but heavily armed and fully garrisoned. The No Man's Land between was a strip of land hardly wider than a country highway. Its width was not from fort to fort, for in front of each fort were rifle-pits—holes in the earth in which men crouched day and night with muskets in their hands. So close were Federal and Confederate that for a man to hold up the tip of his finger was to lose it by a bullet. These pits were reached by open ditches from the trenches of the forts—open ditches along which men must crawl like serpents and hug the earth to escape the bullets searching for them. On other portions of the line there was a truce to this murderous firing now and then, but never here. The desire was to maim and kill, and the fairest day or the blackest night brought no cessation in the firing. To be detailed for the rifle-pits in front of Fort Hades meant to look death in the face for hours, and after six or eight hours of the nervous strain, men crawled back into the trenches and sat down and wept like broken-hearted women. The veteran knew these things from personal experience; the man from the Bowery had simply heard a bit of talk now and then and had interrupted it to exclaim:

"Dat's all stuff and nonsense! Why, I've licked seven men in four days, and dey was all good men, too, and youse don't t'ink I'm afraid of a few bullets, do ye?"



He carelessly raised his head, and his cap went sailing away after the bullet which had passed through it.

One morning Private Ford got up from his breakfast to say to Private Harrigan: "Better go at that musket and give it a thorough cleaning up."

"What's de objeck?"

"We are going to make that experiment at nine o'clock. We are detailed for the rifle-pits in front of Fort Hades."

"Dat's de talk, cully; dat's what I've been waitin' fur. If I don't stand de gaff down dere den I want to be hooted outer camp."

Company A had been detailed for the trenches, and six of the company had been detailed for the three rifle-pits in front—two men to a pit. Private Harrigan marched out of camp in the rear of the fort with his cap on his ear and his chin in the air, but as he reached the trenches and heard the whiz of bullets overhead he began to look serious. The rawest recruit can stand the roar of guns, but the zip of a bullet is a different thing. The two men from pit No. 1 came crawling back along the open ditch, one of them wounded in the hand, and as they both waited for a moment to steady their nerves, Private Harrigan could see that they were old soldiers. He wondered at their pale faces and trembling limbs and began to realize the peril ahead of him.

"Follow me!" said Ford, as he dropped down and began to crawl along the ditch.

Harrigan obeyed without a word, but as a bullet dug up the soil a few inches above his head, he had to shut his teeth hard together to prevent them from clicking. Just before reaching the pit he carelessly raised his head, and his cap went sailing away after the bullet which had passed through it.

"Well, we are here," said Ford, as they crouched in the pit, "and we are here to kill. You take that embrasure to your left and fire at anything that shows, and I'll do the same on my right. Easy now as you lift up, or the top of your head will go flying. Zounds, man, have you no sense?"

Harrigan had raised himself too high; and a bullet had flung dirt into the faces of both.

"Say, dey's tryin' to kill me!" he chattered as he sank back into the pit with pale face and trembling chin.

"Of course they are! That's what you are here for—to be killed. There goes the artillery, and now you'll know why they called it Fort Hades. Watch that embrasure and you'll get a chance to knock some one over."

"I—I can't, cully! My God, but what's to pay now?"

An artillery duel was something to be looked for two or three times daily. The Federal guns were elevated to carry their missiles into Petersburg; the Confederate artillery fired point-blank in hopes to kill and wound and drive the crews from the guns. Over that narrow strip of No Man's Land swept shot and shell and grapeshot and bullet until it seemed as if the dead and buried would be dug up again. A constant shower of dirt rattled down into the pit and the earth heaved and trembled as if an earthquake was at hand. Ford calmly lighted his pipe and took a few whiffs, and then queried of the trembling craven beside him:

"Well, you are a fighter, ain't you?"

"Dey's tryin' to kill us, cully," replied Harrigan, as he lifted his head from his hands.

"You've licked seven men in four days, I understand, and you've always carried a knife or a pistol to help you to bluff or fight. You ain't bluffin' just now, it seems. Didn't I tell you how it would be? Git up, you cur, and do some shootin'!"

"I—I—can't!" gasped the man from the Bowery. "Say, if dey'll stop shootin' I'll—I'll——"

"You'll give 'em your next month's pay," laughed Ford. "Well, I'll speak to 'em about it. There's a feller showin' a leg in my front, and I'll make him go lame for the rest of his days." (Bang.) "That's it—I got him! Why don't you git to work?"

"I'm done up!" groaned Harrigan.

"Licked in the first round, eh? I thought you might stand it a little longer. You are not punching the head of a sick man or an old farmer just now! I thought you were a tough man?"

"I—I was tough, but me sand's gone!" almost wailed the man from the Bowery.

"I reckoned on it. Lots o' fellers who go around with a chip on their shoulder at home lose their sand down here at the front. Keep down, I say!"

"I—I can't stand dis!" shouted Harrigan, whose facial expression had been so changed by fear that his comrade wondered at it.

"If you rise up you are a dead man! Wait till the fire slackens and then take the ditch for it! Say, you are the biggest bluffer I ever saw!"

"Dat's it—I'm a bluffer, and—and——"

And with a yell of terror he scrambled out of the pit, striking and kicking at the man who sought to hold him back, and for a long minute two thousand Federal and Confederate soldiers witnessed a strange spectacle. The man from the Bowery ran towards Fort Hades, but after a few steps turned and ran down the lines. Then another halt, and, waving his arms above his head, he wheeled and ran up the lines. Fifty pieces of artillery and a thousand muskets were blazing and hurling their missiles of death back and forth, but not one of them struck the living target. For fifteen seconds he stood stock still, his face drawn out of shape with the terror gnawing at his heart and his eyes staring through the smoke at the jets of flame as if he could not make them out.

"Here, Harrigan—here!" called Ford, as he raised his head above the earth and waved his cap as a signal.

The man thrust forward his head and peered at him, but the roar of the guns was in his ears and fear had chained his feet to the earth.

"Come on, come on; my God, come on!" shouted Ford at the top of his voice, but the words had hardly passed his lips when the man from the Bowery leaped into the air and fell back—dead!

"He was a fighter—bah!" said the veteran, as he dropped back into the pit. "It's one thing to be a fighter and another thing to find yourself in front of Fort Hades!"

JAPANESE SUPERSTITIONS

THE Japanese, like many Americans, believe there is luck in certain numbers, and are willing to go to great lengths to gain the protection of these lucky symbols.

A single-figure telephone in Tokio sells for from 800 to 1,000 yen ($390 to $490) a year, says the *Electrical Experimenter*. The luckiest number in the estimation of business is eight, because the character for it spreads downward and suggests the idea of gathering prosperity. Number 753 is also believed to be a lucky number, because children are presented at Shinto shrines on their third, fifth and seventh birthdays.

The most unlucky numbers are 42 and 49, because the former may be pronounced "shini," which means "to die," and the latter may be pronounced "shiku," which means "death," and "suffering." Therefore, it is said that those numbers are avoided by individuals and generally taken by Government officers, schools, police stations and other invincible institutions.

HOW A "HUNCH" REALLY WORKS

OF all the queer tricks of the mind none is more interesting than what we popularly call a "hunch," which scientific gentlemen dignify by the name of psychology. None of us would be able to exactly define what is a hunch or how we came to have one. But certainly every one of us has experienced that odd intuition at some time or another. A great many persons always follow this unexplained mental suggestion, and in a notable majority of cases the hunch is borne out by the result.

A student of the subject has recently advanced an explanation that is illuminating and seems to be somewhere near the truth. He holds that the hunch is not really an independent action of the brain trying to see into the future, but is a suggestion taken from the latent storehouse of knowledge that every one possesses. In the course of years all of us have acquired a vast range of information about an infinite number of things. A good deal of this knowledge is subconscious. We are not aware that we possess it. But the moment that some occasion arises where this knowledge plays a part, our faculty of judgment is shaped by the facts hidden away in the mind.

"There is a market letter-writer in Wall Street," says the writer, ""who frankly admits that he judges the course of the market not by reason but by intuition. 'When I write my market advice in the morning,' he says, 'I simply try to get the "feel" of the market. I say that the outlook is that the market will go up, or that the outlook is that it will go down.

" 'Sometimes I give my reasons, but very often I don't. I simply cannot give my reasons, because I do not know them. Frankly, I write on what you would call a hunch.'

"People may call this superstition, but people do not know. This market letter-writer often does give the reasons for his predictions; he is a keen student of conditions and of the technical status; and while he is sometimes wrong on the market, his record compared with that of other market letter-writers is astonishingly good.

"A phenomenon not unlike this is often observed among fishermen, farmers, guides and others who qualify as local weather prophets. Though they occasionally talk of winds and moisture and the look of the sky, they have little scientific knowledge of being right. The psychologist, William James, somewhere gives an example of dentists who can tell you that a tooth will break, but cannot tell you why it will break.

"And what is the explanation in each instance—market prophet, weather prophet and dentist?

"The explanation is that in each instance the individual has acquired over years of experience a mass of empirical knowledge which far outruns his scientific knowledge. He has unconsciously or half-consciously absorbed an indefinite number of items of knowledge which he had not analyzed. In his judgment of things these items of knowledge lying at the back of his mind act as reasons, but they are too vague and incoherent to admit of explanation.

" 'Why don't you speculate?' the market letter-writer was asked.

" 'I used to,' he replied, 'but never successfully. When I speculate my fears and hopes make me nervous and confused; I try to justify my moves with reasons pro and con, and I lose my hunch.' "

LILIES-OF-THE-VALLEY

By ANITA CRAVEN

THE maid glided into the chamber that evening and laid a square envelope on the table before her lady. She lighted a silver candelabrum of waxen tapers, and placed it where its light might fall on her lady's letter. She placed a small vase of lilies-of-the-valley—her lady's favored flower—where their perfume might mingle with the breath of her lady, and left them together—the lilies, which her lady loved, and the lady, whom she loved. The room was quiet and warm, and its warmth was laden with the perfume of the lilies.

A gorgeous robe of deep purple velvet enveloped the lady's slender figure, and lay in a great cloud over the white carpet. She rested her chin in her frail, jeweled hand, and fell to studying the pattern of a pearl paper-knife.

"I should have written to mamma more than a week ago," she mused. "She is to arrive from Europe to-morrow, and her last letter remains unanswered. What a beautiful toy that paper-knife is!"

She balanced it between her fingers, and read the delicate silver tracery inlaid in its pure surface.

"'From Perry W—S— to Phebe. Tear open my heart, and read.' That was one of his earliest gifts. Some time has elapsed since then, but I have torn open your heart, and read, Perry dear, that you love me. I fear I have lacerated your heart, but when your latest pique has vanished, I shall be forthcoming with the balm."

She buried the knife in the flap of the envelope, with a tender, beautiful smile curling her lips, and spread the contents before her on the table.

Your presence is requested at the Marriage Ceremony of

Miss EVE CHANDLER BENNETT,

——AND——

Mr. PERRY WAYNE SUTTON,

Wednesday Afternoon, November Twelfth—Five O'clock.

SAINT THOMAS' CHURCH,

NEW YORK CITY.

Eighteen Hundred Ninety-Six.

Two hours later she lifted her chin from the frail white hand in which it had rested and pushed the epistle from her. She drew the lilies-of-the-valley from the vase and laid them against her lips in a mute caress.

"Eve—Eve, my little friend—confidante! Can you be happy? I had thought—— Hortense!"

The maid glided into the chamber as she had before, that evening. "Hortense! What is it? Why do you stare at me as though your blood had frozen?"

"What may I do for you? Mees Phebe ees not well?"

"Close the windows, for I am chilled. Now fasten these lilies-of-the-valley in my bosom. Careful! Do not crush them. Place a few in my hair. Hortense, mamma is expected home to-morrow. I am going to write a note to her, and if I am not here at five o'clock, she will find it, and it will explain my absence. Get me my seals."

Hortense hastened to obey her mistress, and softly arranged the delicate waxen flowers in the black hair.

"Zay are beautiful, Mees Phebe! Zay are more beautiful zan ze pearls I sometimes put zare. What more may I do?"

"Snuff these tapers and kindle a charcoal fire in the grate. Heap it high, for I am cold, and I will watch the sparks fly while I write."

"Mees Phebe, you should not be cold like zat. Ze room is vary warm."

"Hortense, you are a good girl. Ah! do as I bid. That pearl silk which I purchased last week is for you. I do not want it. Fill the grate with charcoal—heap it up—and draw all the draperies about the room."

She settled into the recess of the great chair, and drew paper before her. The maid busied herself in executing the commands of her lady, pausing now and then in her duties to listen to the scratching of Phebe's pen.

The curtains were closely drawn, shutting out the night and the gloom. The charcoal in the grate had commenced to crackle and snap and shoot out myriads of evanescent sparks. Phebe's letter was finished, addressed to her mother, and a waxen crest impressed thereon. She glanced up questioningly at the devoted Hortense who stood by her.

"That is all, Hortense. No, take this letter and deliver it to mamma yourself, should I not be here. Don't forget the pearl silk. Leave me now. Should I need you again to-night, I will call."

The maid glided away without speaking, hastily brushing away tears of gratitude and devotion. She looked back and all around the young lady's apartment. The room was still and warm, and the air heavy with the odor of lilies-of-the-valley and perfumed sealing-wax.

Late on the morning of November twelfth Hortense bore a cup of chocolate to her lady's chamber. The crash that the tray made as it fell from her trembling hands did not disturb Phebe, whose slight figure was settled in the recess of the great chair. Her golden pen lay on the carpet, where it had fallen from her nerveless fingers. Before her, on the table, lay a second epistle, unfinished.

"DEAR PERRY—I know too late that your threat, which I thought a jest, was honest. I believed you loved me, and were waiting for me to have done with my play. Eve never told me—and we were confidantes. She always knew my heart, and told me I knew hers.

"To-day you are to wed her—my bosom friend. Be loving and true to little Eve. Set down on this day, and every succeeding day of your earthly pilgrimage, those figures which will make a grand total when they are added up at life's end.

"Perry, dear, memory cannot recall one hour when I have not loved you. My eyes have not seen what there is to see of the future, but they have looked upon all that ordinary eyes could of the present. Shall we all, in the approaching Time, be united where there will be no chiding? Be mindful of your charge. The richest blessings upon my dear Eve and Perry——"

And the medical examiner thrust his thumbs into his vest and said:

"The young lady has inhaled irrespirable gases. She was quickly incapacitated, unable to free herself when she realized her danger, if she did—or summon aid."

And the newspaper men who called gave to the world the following:

"Miss Phebe Irving, age twenty-four, died at her home, 35 W—th street, from asphyxia. A charcoal fire which had been kindled in the grate by her maid was neglected, and Miss Irving was overcome by the fumes. The shocking discovery was made by the unfortunate young woman's maid, when she entered the room to attend her mistress this morning. Miss Irving was a brilliant member of the smart set, and prominent in charitable organizations and clubs for the advancement of women. Particularly sad is the fact that Miss Irving's mother, who has been in Europe for two months past, is expected to arrive in New York to-day.

"The appalling visitor, who is never a stranger in our midst—death—stole up to Miss Irving while she was writing a congratulatory letter to her friend, Mr. Perry W. Sutton, whose marriage to Miss Eve C. Bennett is to take place this afternoon. The interment arrangements have not yet been made, pending Mrs. Irving's arrival."

A later edition of the daily papers contained another item:

"While rambling through the woods at Fordham early this morning, Perry W. Sutton stumbled and falling upon his gun, which was immediately discharged, was fatally wounded. The bullet penetrated the left lung, one and a half inches over the heart. But for the intelligence of his dog, Mr. Sutton might have died unattended; the actions of the sagacious creature attracted the attention of Mr. Sutton's father to the spot where the young man lay.

"Help was summoned, and the young man cared for. Mr. Sutton was thirty years of age, a prominent clubman, and took great interest in political and literary matters. He had been spending the week at his father's country house in Fordham, and was to have been married this afternoon to Miss Eve C. Bennett of this city. No hope is entertained for his recovery. Miss Bennett was prostrated by the news. Condolences are pouring in upon the two grief-stricken families."

But the lilies-of-the-valley had wilted and drooped amongst the folds of black hair, bowed their heads and died upon the still bosom of Phebe. The tapers had burned into the sockets of the candelabrum; the hearth was cold and sooty and heaped with ashes; the draperies were closely drawn, shutting out the sunshine and the morning; the room was still and warm, and the treacherous air heavy with the odor of lilies-of-the-valley and perfumed sealing-wax.

GLOVES WORN IN ALL AGES

ALMOST everybody wears gloves nowadays, but perhaps few of us have considered the long evolution necessary to produce the modern glove of snug-fitting kid. Gloves were known among the Persians and in Biblical times of a type like our own wool mitten. And, strangely enough, they were called "shoes." It would seem that in the dark ages following the fall of Rome only the Germans wore gloves to any extent. These were mostly of skins, and it is doubtful if they had progressed to the stage of having "fingers."

The Saxons no doubt brought gloves to England, and it is from their word "glof" that we get our "glove." With the coming of the Normans the gauntlet appeared in England. From these hardy warriors we have derived the term "iron hand," for their gloves were made of iron plates, and they were able to deal fearful blows by a mere stroke of the hands. To the fourteenth century it began to be a custom for dignitaries to wear jeweled gloves. The clergy had different kinds of gloves for different vestments. By this time gloves had become elaborate affairs of silk, precious skins, etc. It was a nice custom of the day to put poison in a pair of gloves and present them to some one who happened to be unpopular with the sender. Jeanne d'Albert, mother of Henry IV. of France, is said to have been poisoned in that way.

Good Queen Bess established the custom of conferring her glove upon those whom she liked. By another twist it became a mark of favor for a gallant to have his lady's glove. And it was the practice of knighthood to cast a gauntlet upon the ground in defiance of all and sundry. The man who picked it up must do battle.

HOW OUR ANCESTORS TOLD THE TIME

CLOCKS stare us in the face at every turn nowadays, and a good watch may be had at such small cost that we rarely think of what a staggering blow would be dealt our modern scheme of life if we should suddenly lose the means of reckoning time. But it is a fact that almost everything we do, eating, drinking, working and sleeping, is dictated by the hands of the clock. Even our very remote ancestors found necessary in conducting their leisurely affairs some method of recording the hours. In the collection of the National Museum at Washington are many specimens of ancient timekeeping devices, including sun-dials, both fixed and portable; hour glasses, time lamps and candles, clocks and hundreds of watches, from which the development of that industry may be traced.

In remote ages the Japanese and Chinese used a knotted wick, two feet in length, for telling the time. The wick burned slowly and each knot recorded an hour. Philippe II. of Spain is said to have used an oil lamp for the same purpose. The oil was contained in a glass receptacle, on which was a scale marking the hours from 4 in the afternoon to 8 the next morning, and the height of the liquid upon the scale would show the time. A twelve-inch candle, of which three inches would burn away in an hour, is supposed to have been used by King Alfred.

Sun-dials, which date back to early times, were not all like the kind set up as ornaments in modern gardens. Specimens of pocket dials of brass and ivory are in the collection, besides a ring with a hole in the top. Held in position to admit a ray of the sun through the hole, the hour is marked on a scale inside the ring. There is also a model of a pole used by the Montagnais Indians of Canada. It was set up and parties of hunters passing by would mark the shadow of the sun on the snow for the information of those who were to follow.

Water power clocks existed in Egypt in 300 B. C., but they were not accurate. Better ones, known as Clepsydras, were produced in the seventeenth century, and a specimen with an alarm attachment was secured for the museum by Dr. Samuel P. Langley. Clocks operated by weights appeared during the thirteenth or fourteenth century, the invention of the escapement being credited to John Megestein of Cologne.

FROM THE BORDERS OF DEVACHAN

By SALLIE F. TOLER

THOSE who are interested in archæology will remember the private expedition sent out to Mayapan (El Pendos de los Mayas), by the directors of the Metropolitan Art Museum, equipped and supported by Erastus Millman, the antiquity-loving millionaire of New York.

The report of a rich field in a comparatively unexplored district, together with the hope of important discoveries bearing on Millman's favorite theory, the identity of the ancient Mayas with the primitive Asiatic races, led to the fitting out of the party.

But that which interests those who keep posted on the latest discoveries from buried history, is to know what became of the remarkable "find" which the party reported, accounts of which were published under flaming headlines in the daily newspapers.

This is a copy of the original despatch sent to Erastus Millman from Merida:

"To ERASTUS MILLMAN, New York:

"We ship from Medeira on Wednesday, for New York, bringing with us some of the most remarkable discoveries yet unearthed, among which is the mummy of a *tlatoani*, or Mayan noble, in a most complete and life-like state of preservation. Signed, HENRY LANGDON."

The newspaper accounts of this discovery were all the public ever heard of it. If any inquisitive archæologist made more particular inquiry he was put off with vague promises and rather ambiguous explanations.

Here is a true story of the whole affair, beginning with the daughter of Erastus Millman.

Julia Millman was perhaps the most thoroughly educated woman of her age in New York. Since her father had been assured of certain fortune, he had devoted himself to two things—his passion for research in archæology, and in training his only daughter that she might be as enthusiastic a student of antiquity as himself. She was twenty-six years old and could read and speak nine different languages.

With her father, she joined in the various exploration parties from different parts of the world, and had gone with him wherever the secrets of the past are being torn from the heart of the unwilling earth. She was with the expedition which discovered the Great Temple from the Mound, *Tell el Yahuduyeh*, one of the romances of archæology.

The sole reason why they had not accompanied the party to Mayapan was because Erastus Millman had been unaccountably attacked with gout, a thing which he could not account for, seeing he was of most abstemious habits in spite of his great wealth. In fact, both father and daughter lived in a manner more belonging to an humble bookkeeper than to a multimillionaire.

True, they spent money—plenty of it—but not for fine clothing, jewels, costly food or expensive establishment. They lived in an unpretending brownstone front on East Forty-seventh street, which was crammed from cellar to attic with treasures dug out of the ground.

There were mummies from the pyramids of Egypt, from the graveyards of Peru and from the lava-encrusted Pompeii; there were manuscripts in parchment and stone from the remotest depths of India, and bronze cats from the "Cat Cemetery" of Bubastes; there were torques, armlets and beds, wrought in gold, from the bronze period, and pottery, bronze swords and shields from the same age; there were statuettes and bas-reliefs from Calamis, Phydias and Polycletus. A part of their possessions were in the Metropolitan Museum, besides the many gifts and loans in the Smithsonian Institute and other important museums.

Julia Millman was engaged to be married to Herbert Elmore, a civil engineer, who had gone out to Mayapan with the exploring party.

Elmore was thirty, and had made considerable progress in his profession. He was very much in love with his fiancée, who received his affection in a calm, impassive way, which caused her friends to say of her:

"Julia Millman's loves and friendships are as undemonstrative as her father's mummies; they smell of the catacombs."

On the day of the party's return from Central America, boxes containing the collection had been brought to Millman's house, and Julia and her father were awaiting the arrival of Elmore and Henry Langdon, the Metropolitan director who had sent the telegraphic despatch, to open and examine the contents.

Presently they were announced, and Herbert Elmore took his fiancée in his arms before them all, but half pleased at her ill-concealed impatience to get at the work in hand.

"You're not half so anxious to see me as you are in opening these boxes," he said reproachfully. "I feel that I shall grow madly jealous of this Aztec fellow, even if he has been dead five hundred years."

"You silly boy," smiled Julia; "of course I am glad to see you; but this is a Mayan," she corrected, "not an Aztec; they are two centuries later."

Several of the smaller boxes were opened first, and the contents bestowed on shelves, previous to a descriptive labeling. When at last the box containing the remains of the *tlatoani* was opened, Julia and her father could scarcely restrain their impatience while the straw and palm leaves with which the figure was wrapped were being removed.

"Prepare yourselves to be startled," said Elmore. "I believe it is the most remarkable 'find' on record. There is no shrinking away of the tissues. The whole body seems to have been preserved in some wonderful way."

"There was a method of preservation of the dead," said Millman, always ready to harp on his favorite string, "among the ancient Hindus, which was known only to the Yoghis, but said to be shared by them with the keepers of the Egyptian Rites and Mysteries."

"But this is a Central American Indian," said Langdon, the director.

"No matter, their origin is the same. The original peopling of America dates from the time there was continuous land between this continent and Asia," returned Erastus Millman.

A cry of astonishment burst from the group when the figure was at last exposed to view.

The body of this ancient inhabitant of Central America

lay in his rough coffin, looking as if he had died but yesterday. The handsome and but faintly copper-colored face wore an expression so benign, so near to a smile, that he appeared rather to be sleeping than dead. The heavy black hair drooped across a smooth, noble forehead, which was broad and high—and not flattened, as has been proved the custom from the numerous bas-reliefs and remains of mummies found at Palenque and Uxmal—and swept clinging around his neck like folds of satin. The brows were finely arched and the lashes lay lightly on the high cheeks. The well-shaped hands, held close to the sides, were perfect.

"This is incredible!" exclaimed Elmore. "It is even more life-like than when first exhumed. My God!" he gasped in consternation, dropping the hand he had taken in his, "it is flesh!"

"And what did it appear to be at first?" asked Millman, trembling with excitement and forgetting his gouty foot to kneel beside the box.

"Stone, or some similar substance," answered both the other men in a breath.

"We have been swindled," said Langdon. "Some one has substituted a real body for our find at Mayapan."

"Impossible!" returned Elmore. "The boxes have never been out of my sight except from the Pennsylvania depot to this house. It is the same. See this!" and he lifted the long, loose sleeve that hid the wrist, and showed a bracelet of large, pearls with a pendant of onyx.

"Indian pearls!" pronounced Millman, more excited over a possible clue than over the extraordinary appearance of the body. "The carving on the pendant is Indian, too!"

The longer they looked, the more grew the illusion that the Mayan noble was not dead, and when Millman, removing the outer wrapping, applied his hand to the region of the heart, there was not a smile.

"What are we to do?" asked Langdon. "We should be mobbed if we set up an object like this in the museum and claimed that it had been dead five hundred years."

"We must wait," returned Millman. Then he bent over the body and examined the nostrils closely.

"I was sure of it," he said in triumph; "the man is not dead; it is a case of suspended animation.

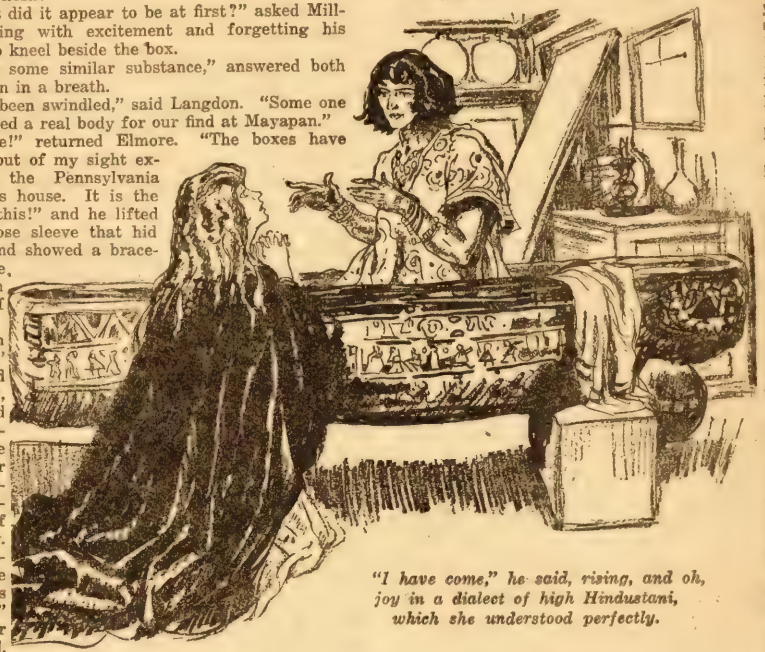
"This composition which fills the nostrils," he went on, removing as he spoke a substance that looked like a red paste, "is *mantra*, used by the red-cap lamas of Thibet and the Buddhists of Mongol, when they voluntarily undergo a cessation of animation and allow themselves to be buried for thirty, forty or sixty days."

"But surely you do not credit these idle traveler's tales?" protested Elmore.

"I have no motive in telling 'idle traveler's tales' myself," returned Millman somewhat coldly; "both my daughter and myself have witnessed the feat more than once. At Agra, an Indian Yoghi was put into a cataleptic state by another Yoghi, and buried for thirty days. We saw him buried and exhumed again after the wheat had grown over his grave, which was watched night and day during the period."

Julia had uttered no word all this time. She stooped, awed and speechless, gazing at the beautiful face, which for some reason appealed to her, not as an archæologist, but as a human being. At length she rose to her feet and said to her father:

"If you think it is as you say, it is your duty to do all you can to resuscitate him. You know how they do it," she whispered.



"I have come," he said, rising, and oh, joy in a dialect of high Hindustani, which she understood perfectly.

Her father hesitated.

"It was a knowledge almost fraudulently obtained," he said, "and I promised, only in an extreme case — but this is an extreme case."

"The fact is," continued Millman to others, "I must be alone with my subject for the experiment."

"Oh, but, I say——" began Elmore.

"We cannot place this 'find' in the museum," insisted the old man, "no matter what we have promised. So it will remain here, anyway, until further developments. Meantime, our dinner is already delayed until I am afraid to meet my housekeeper."

Langdon took himself off, after having been sworn to secrecy, and Herbert remained to dine with his sweetheart.

To tell the truth, Julia Millman tried to meet her lover's caresses half-way that evening, but she was strangely absent, and it was with shame that she acknowledged to herself a feeling of relief when he took his departure.

Left to himself, Erastus Millman, armed with an electric battery and some rolls of old parchment, locked himself in the room with the strange presence, turned on the bright lights of two incandescent lamps and commenced his work.

First he examined the rolls of parchment, and, having

found what he sought, laid it down—face up—on the table, with a foot from the tomb of one of the Rameses to hold it in place. Then he removed every trace of the *mantra* from the nostrils and all obstructions from the ears. He next proceeded to turn the body over on its face. It was rigid as stone, but not so heavy.

He adjusted the battery, and, applying one end of the coil to the cervical vertebræ, and the other to the heart, he waited.

No sense of the ridiculous pervaded these endeavors. It was little difference to Erastus Millman whether the man had been dead for five hours, or five hundred years, besides, the unaccountable life-like appearance of the body warranted a trial.

For two hours he used the battery, applying it to various vital parts with no visible result.

Then he turned the body back again to its original position and studied the parchment once more. From a cabinet in the corner of the room he took a substance with which he drew a double pentagram on the floor, the lines enclosing the box. A slight luminous blue vapor arose following the lines, after he had stepped inside.

Taking the stony hands of the Mayan in his own, he placed his thumbs to those of the dead hands and repeated in Sanscrit these words:

"Oh, Brahm, release the vital spark which once animated this body and allow it to come back to its own. Oh, Brahm, unless that atom animates another, send it to take its own—so long bereft."

Making the mesmeric passes from the head to the feet, he extended himself upon the body, heart to heart, and put his lips, breathing and warm, to the lips so long silent.

"Thou infinite breath, Dhyani Buddha, emanation of the great Brahm, intercede with thy great source, that this cold temple of stone may be animated again with the warmth of the glowing bosom of Eternal Sun."

It was in vain. Neither the compelling force of science nor the adurations of magic availed. There was no more sign of life than at first.

At length, exhausted and half dead himself, Millman gave over his efforts. He removed all traces of his task, turned out the lights and went to his room.

As he was about to enter his door, his daughter came across the hall and stopped him with a question.

"It is useless! It is too late—five hundred years too late! Let me go! I can endure no more!"

Julia stood for a few moments in deep thought, then she went back into her room and threw about her shoulders a long, dark cloak that hid her white dressing-gown, and walked swiftly down-stairs and into the room where the mysterious mummy lay.

Without the least tremor she turned on the lights and locked the door behind her.

Kneeling beside the box, she gazed long and earnestly at the dead face. What nobility and strength was expressed there. What a pity that so perfect a specimen of manhood should be senseless clay, while so many unworthy——

Her thoughts fell unwillingly on Elmore, and she remembered with a feeling of repulsion his rather sharp and not handsome face and his undersized body. This man must have been an ideal of stalwart strength and virile beauty.

What was the secret of his miraculous preservation? Could it be really death? She leaned across until the soft brown tresses of her loosened hair mingled with the ebon lock of the Mayan.

"Come back, god-like man of the past, or take me where your spirit wanders in the invisible. Oh, why do I live too late to know thee?"

Her eyes fell on the parchment which her father, in his fatigue, had forgotten. She sat down at the table and studied it closely. A note in later Sanscrit, impressed along the uneven edge of the manuscript, caught her eye.

"And I, Sron Tsan, do add to these instructions herein preserved, that all is not told. When it may be that the spark of life is vanished so far away that Brahm himself is powerless to recall it from the borders of Devachan, then I, Sron Tsan, say it is well to call on one of the Dara-Eke, the Glorious Mothers, who represent divine vengeance and divine love. If hate animate the soul, it shall be Okken Tengri, the terrible; but if it be love, then let the suppliant kiss the lips of the deserted body, and call upon Kwan Yin."

Julia dropped softly to her knees again and pressed her lips, warm and living, to the mouth, cold and unresponsive for centuries.

The words came to her without effort or study.

"Oh, divine personification of Avalokites Vara, come to the aid of thy daughter who, of old, was faithful priestess in thy temple. Restore me this life, or take me to dwell with him in that Eternal Lumanæ that holds the uncompleted soul."

A warmth seemed to grow under the lips, a faint perfume emanated from the body, and the cheeks took on a living hue.

The breast, under the folds of yellow cloth that constituted the sign of Mayan nobility, heaved tumultuously, then settled into a regular healthful movement. A rich red crept into the lips, and, forgetting all else but her delirious love, Julia kissed them passionately.

Presently the eyes opened wide and returned her look of compelling adoration with an answering smile of comprehension.

She clasped her hands and hung over her treasure, snatched from the tomb of centuries, with silent ecstasy. Long they gazed into each other's eyes while the mysterious qualities of life, so long absent, rallied to the fast quickening body.

A subtle correspondence of thought, vague and dim, yet strangely familiar, was exchanged in that lingering gaze.

"I have come," he said, rising, and oh, joy, in a dialect of high Hindustani, which she understood perfectly.

"And you will stay?" she breathed.

"Perhaps; for a time, at least. I know not, tender white maiden, who thou art, nor why I am here amid these strange surroundings, but the gods doeth all things well. Was it Ixmal who awakened me? And is the time, the forty hours, expired?"

"No, it was not Ixmal; it was I. But tell me who thou art?"

"Surely, every one knows Kabah, third son of the house of Tsal. But I am bewildered and confused, and you are strange to me. Where am I? And who are you, with the tender, pitying face of a mountain lily?"

"I am a stranger and thou art far from thine own land. Thy unconsciousness, instead of lasting for forty hours, has endured for as many centuries as there are beads broidered on the altar-cloth of *Tlazolteotl*." *

Kabah, of the house of Tsal, sat up and gazed at Julia in astonishment, then made a movement of instinctive modesty as the yellow robe, decayed with ages, fell away, leaving his breast uncovered.

"How do you know this secret of the goddess of pleasure—you a young woman, and pure?"

* Tlazolteotl, goddess of pleasure, worshiped by courtesans, whose altar-cloth was embroidered in five hundred beaded points, emblematic of the five hundred broken vows of chastity.

Julia took off the long black mantle which she wore and wrapped it about the shoulders of her strange companion.

Then she told him of the years since the land of the Mayas was overrun by a savage conqueror from across the sea, its gentle people exterminated, or fused into that of the subduing nation—of the flight of time and the destruction of his once proud country, now known only by the study of its ruins. She told him of the expedition to Mayapan and of her father's belief and efforts and failure.

Then she told him how she had invoked the aid of Kwan Yin, the divine virgin, to help her.

"How say you? Kwan Yin, the name of one of the traditionary gods of my ancestors from out of the West? See, this bracelet of pearls I wear is from that land. This pendant of onyx is graven with the name of Kwan Yin. I have ever thought her a myth, as were other gods of the strange peoples.

"And am I, of all my race, left living, far from my father's land, from the temple of our gods? Why have you recalled me to a world where all is strange?"

As he turned reproachfully to Julia, his eyes softened with a look of ineffable tenderness.

"The spirit knows no fetters," he said; "the gods themselves are not stronger than love, and my soul hath answered thine own. Is it not so, my own, my mate for eternity, my twin soul who has summoned me hither? Was it not the ardent longing of your love that called me from the invisible?

"But my spirit would illy fit my body now, and I know that I may not remain. But thou, art thou ready to follow, my love, my sweet?"

"I am yours, only yours," murmured Julia, in a voice stifled with emotion. "If it may not be in life, then yours in death."

"There is no death," answered her lover with a strange smile. "Am I not proof of the Everlasting?" and he clasped her close in his arms.

At half-past eight o'clock Erastus Millman came into the room. The body of his daughter Julia knelt half embracing the box which had held the remains of the dead Mayan. The box was empty now, and as Millman lifted the long dark cloak which lay inside, a subtle, impalpable dust arose and filled the room with a faint violet color and an odor of incense.

UNCLE SAM'S WEATHER HOODOO

THERE is plenty of precedent for the weather conditions which are crippling Uncle Sam at the critical moment when it is most needful for everything to run smoothly. In almost every great crisis in our country's history the weather has played our foes' hand against us. For example:

A record winter, for cold, all but demolished the American Army at Valley Forge. A cold snap nearly wrecked the crossing of the Delaware. The same cold snap froze New York Harbor, so that the British were able to transport stores and cannon across the ice between the Battery and Staten Island.

A January thaw ruined the chance of the Army of the Potomac to capture Lee's whole army on the Rappahannock in 1862, and thus end the Civil War.

A storm prevented the relief of Fort Sumter, thus leading to its bombardment and the outbreak of the Civil War.

A tropical cloudburst almost lost us all of Northern Mexico by soaking the powder at Buena Vista and rendering the American Army's best munitions useless.

A dense fog caused the blunder which lost George Washington the Battle of Germantown, which (historians agree) might well have won our country's freedom at one stroke, averting six more years of costly war.

Wholesale sunstrokes blocked the movements of Washington's troops at the Battle of Monmouth, and they made him abandon his plan for cutting the enemy to pieces before they could reach the safety of New York.

Terrific heat impeded the progress of our armies in Cuba in 1898, and caused more deaths and incapacity than did all the Spanish bullets.

A storm drove the Pilgrim Fathers a thousand miles out of their course and landed them, in midwinter, at Plymouth, when they had planned to settle far to southward. That first icy winter almost destroyed their colony.

So the Weather Man is playing true to ancient form in sending weeks of ice and snow to tie up transportation and coal at a time when transportation and coal are most necessary to our country's war activities.

GOOSEFISH MAKES EXCELLENT FOOD

LAST year the fishermen of the Atlantic seaboard of the United States caught with their lines and nets 400,000 goosefish, great bulky fellows four feet long and weighing twenty-five pounds each. In all they pulled in 10,000,000 pounds of this fish and at every haul swore roundly and dumped the catch back into the sea. Yet whenever a fisherman threw one of these greedy bait eaters overboard he lost to the consuming public the same quantity of nourishing food we would have if his discard had been a similar weight in choice sirloin steak.

There was but one reason for his action and that was the fish ignorance of the American people, asserts William C. Redfield, Secretary of Commerce, in *The Nations Business*. The housewives of the United States, not knowing that goosefish exists, do not ask for it when they go to market. As a consequence the market man does not buy it from the fisherman, and so the latter refuses to bring it to the wharves. Goosefish is as good and as palatable and as nourishing as cod or salmon or shad, but the consumer does not know about it and no demand is created.

"What is true of goosefish is true of a score of others," Mr. Redfield continued. "An immense reservoir of food for Americans in war time is being overlooked. Vast quantities of the cheapest animal food in the United States remain practically unused while prices soar and conventional supplies are exhausted. And all the time the average man in this country, with seafood resources that are almost unequaled the world around, eats one pound of fish where the Britisher eats five, where the German eats six, where the Hollander eats seven, where the Scandinavian eats eight, where the Chinese eats ten, and the Japanese eats twenty-five. Careless and extravagant in the possession of his great wealth, the American has been indifferent to economy and his neglected fish."

THE CROYDEN CASE

A Detective Serial

BY POLICE CAPTAIN HOWARD

CHAPTER NINE

DARK WORK IN SAVILLE ROW

Early the next morning after the reception, William Rupel arose, dressed, and after having his breakfast, left the house, without going into the library. Rev. Frank Hoffman had stayed all night at Lady Cathcart's, and had told his friend that he would not be home until the morning of the day that the statesman was to sail for France.

William was busy all day, being engaged in settling up some business affairs, and did not return home until late in the evening. When he entered his libary he was greatly surprised to see what had occurred. He called up the servants and questioned them. No one had been in the library, and they were as ignorant as he was about the affair. He dismissed the servants and ordered them not to say anything about what had happened. He then closed the safe and determined to wait until the detective arrived, before he notified the police. He was so excited that he never thought of the papers that he had left in the secretaire. He looked at this, and, seeing that all the drawers were closed, he supposed that the safe was the only thing that had been plundered.

He sat down by the fire and prepared to wait until Phil Roach came. Twelve o'clock struck and still the statesman waited.

"I can't imagine why he has not put in an appearance before this," murmured William, as he pulled out his watch and saw that it was three o'clock. "Perhaps he has got into trouble. If he don't come by seven o'clock, I will go over to the countess' and see if he is there."

Five o'clock came, but it did not bring Phil Roach. William was now greatly worried. He heard the newsman leave the morning papers. He went to the door, and brought them into the library. He picked up *The Standard*, and then leaned his back against the secretaire, held the paper out at full length, as he was in the habit of doing, and commenced to scan the page. His eyes rested on the first column, he started, turned pale, and trembled fearfully.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "Am I awake? No, this must be some hideous nightmare."

He rubbed his eyes, pinched his arm to make sure that he was not sleeping, and then looked at the paper again.

"This is fearful," he cried, and then commenced to read aloud the heading of the column:

A Fearful Tragedy in Saville Row—Clarence Rupel murders the Countess de Bouillon, and then is killed by Ben Sherman, a notorious rough, who claims to be the Countess' brother—Detective Philip Roach seriously wounded—Papers found by the Detective which will aid in convicting Sir William Rupel of Forgery.

William Rupel read the three-column report, which gave an accurate account of all that had occurred at the residence of the Countess de Bouillon, together with a history of his public life, and a synopsis of what the stolen papers contained.

When he had finished reading he pulled his watch from his pocket and looked at the time.

"Six o'clock," he said; "the train for Liverpool leaves at six-thirty. I must leave London, and make good my escape before the police arrive. I will not be arrested if I can help it. I will make my way to a foreign land, and there live in exile rather than suffer the disgrace of a trial."

He went into his bedroom, hastily packed a few articles of clothing in a valise, put on his overcoat, and then started to leave the house. He opened the door, and looked up and down the street to ascertain if the coast were clear. No one was in sight; so without waiting any longer he descended the steps, and then walked hurriedly off in the direction of the depot.

Rupel had hardly left the housee when two men ascended the steps and rang the door-bell.

"Is Sir William Rupel in?" asked one of the men when the servant came to the door.

"Yes; but he is not up yet," answered the girl.

"Will you be so kind as to tell him that two gentlemen want to see him on very important business?"

"I will," answered the girl; "if you will step into the parlor and wait, I will go and call him."

The men followed the girl into the parlor, and took seats by the hall door. The servant was gone about ten minutes when she returned and said:

"Sir William is not in his room. He could not have gone to bed last night, for the bed is still made up. I have looked in the library, and cannot find him there."

"Quick!" exclaimed the man who had done all the talking, "we must hurry back to Scotland Yard, and do all we can to prevent him from escaping."

The men left the house and hurried off. William Rupel reached the depot just as the train was about to start, boarded it, and was steaming away from London before the detectives had left his house.

He reached Liverpool in the afternoon, and bought an evening paper. He saw that the police were looking for him in every place. So far he had succeeded in evading those who had been stationed at the depot. He hurried to a private hotel, where he was not known, and engaged a room. He then proceeded to shave off his whiskers. When this was done, he took a bottle of hair-dye from his pocket and dyed his hair.

When he finished disguising himself, he looked at the paper and found that a steamer was to sail that evening for Spain. He then went to the wharf, engaged passage, and by eight o'clock that night he was breathing easily, while the steamer was steaming along at a fast rate to

the country where he hoped to be free from arrest, and where he hoped to lead a quiet and peaceful life.

After Phil Roach had been removed to a bedroom, he lay in an unconscious state for some hours after the bullet had been extracted from his side. The affair had been reported already at police headquarters and at Scotland Yard, and two detectives were sent to the house to take charge of things and to attend to Phil Roach until a nurse could be procured. They arrived about four o'clock in the morning, and just as the noted detective was gaining consciousness. When they entered the room, they found Roach trying to get up. They compelled him to lie down again, for they knew that he was too weak to do anything.

"I must get up," said the detective, in reply to his two associates.

"You can't; you're too weak," answered one of the men.

"This case is an important one, and no time must be lost in communicating it to Sir William Rupel."

"If there is anything that you want done, we can do it."

Roach tried to get up again, but was compelled to give up the attempt. He then said to one of the men:

"Look in my pocket and you will find a bundle of papers, which I placed there before I was shot. I want to see what they contain."

The papers were handed to him, and, after he read a few pages, he excitedly exclaimed:

"Now I understand why that reporter was so intent upon reading these." He then turned to the detectives: "Quick, my men, go and swear out a warrant for Sir William Rupel's arrest for forgery. Hurry; the affair will be in the papers, and, unless you reach the statesman's house before it is daylight, he will escape."

William Rupel did escape, as we know, and the whole force at Scotland Yard was baffled. All of London was in a fever-heat of excitement over the tragedy and the revelations that followed. Days passed, and no clue to William Rupel's whereabouts could be found.

Ben Sherman was tried and sentenced to be hung. Fred Kissam had escaped, as well as the other members of the gang. The rendezvous on the banks of the Thames was seized and confiscated to the Crown, as well as all the other property belonging to the false Countess de Bouillon.

Lady Anne Rupel was so crazed over the death of her son and the revelations which followed that she committed suicide by taking poison. Her remains were buried together with those of her son in the chapel at Croyden Abbey.

For weeks Phil Roach was confined to his bed at the house in Saville Row. When the Rev. Frank Hoffman heard of the detective's illness, he and Lady Jane Austen visited Phil, and lavished upon him every attention. It was principally owing to their good nursing that the detective was able to get out as soon as he did.

The Rupel property was placed in the hands of William Rupel's lawyers. They commenced to straighten up the affairs of the estate. When, finally, months had passed, and no news was heard of William Rupel, the lawyers concluded that their client must be dead, and so commenced to look around for the next of kin to whom the estates would belong.

Roach fully recovered, and one day, while he was sitting in his office reading a newspaper, one of William Rupel's lawyers entered, and after he had taken a seat, he said:

"I want to engage your services, Mr. Roach, in connection with the finding of the lawful heir of the Rupel estates."

"Have you ever heard anything of your client?" asked the detective.

"No."

"Do you think that he is dead?"

"I do. I think he must have committed suicide."

"I don't," answered Phil Roach in a decided manner.

"What then do you think has become of him?"

"I think he is hiding in some foreign country."

"What leads you to think so?"

"I have not been idle all these months," replied the detective.

"Have you been trying to find him?"

"I have, and with some success. The government has offered a large reward for his arrest, and I am going to have it."

"Have you no pity for William Rupel?"

"I pity him, but then," answered the detective, "he has committed a crime, and if he were my own brother I would follow him to the ends of the world and capture him."

The lawyer was silent for a long time, and then Roach said:

"You ask me to try to find the heir to the estates. I have done so already, and when the time comes I will tell you who he or she is."

The lawyer tried to get the detective to tell him something more, but Roach refused to say anything further in relation to his search.

After his visitor had gone, Phil wrote a few letters, and after he had sealed the envelopes he said, as he arose from the desk:

"Well, this search for William Rupel has been a long and tedious one, but at last I have succeeded in tracing my man. It took me some time to trace him to Liverpool, but then I have now the satisfaction of knowing that it will not be many days before he will be back in England."

Roach had worked diligently for months. For a long time he was baffled, but at last came across a farmer who had traveled in the same coach with William Rupel to Liverpool. The detective went to Liverpool, discovered the hotel where the statesman had stopped, and at last the steamer on which he had sailed.

Roach next traced his man to Spain, and at last to Baden-Baden, where William Rupel was now staying.

In his search the detective had become complete master of the whole history of the Rupels, and in this way he discovered who the heir of the estates was, in the event of the death of Lady Anne and her son Clarence.

That afternoon Roach took a steamer for France, and a few days afterwards he was in Baden-Baden.

He found William Rupel stopping at a little farmhouse outside of the city. The statesman still dyed his hair and shaved close. Most of his time since his arrival at the famous resort had been spent at the gaming table, at which he managed to make enough money to live upon in ease. Rupel was always restless and uneasy in his mind. Several times he had been prompted to return to England and surrender himself to the authorities. He was thinking of doing this when Roach arrived. The detective waited a few days before he made his presence known. At last, early one morning he walked out to the farmhouse and asked to see Count Lefevre. This was the name by which William Rupel was was known at Baden-Baden.

The detective was ushered into the statesman's apartment, and the minute he entered the door Rupel recognized him, and said:

"Mr. Roach, I suppose you have come to arrest me?"

"Yes, Sir William."

"Don't call me that," cried the fugitive, "call me simply William Rupel. I will return with you to England."

The man who had done so much for his countrymen now dropped into his chair, covered his face with his hands and commenced to cry like a little child.

Roach was silent, and when Rupel ceased crying, he said:

"We will start to-night for London."

"I will go any time you say," replied William.

In a few days London was in a state of excitement over the arrest of William Rupel. The papers again recounted the incidents of the tragedy, and contained long editorials upon the arrest and the coming trial. Party feeling ran very high—both in Parliament and out. William Rupel had thousands of friends and sympathizers, who were working in his favor. Rev. Frank Hoffman visited his friend in prison, as did also Lady Jane Austen.

The day set for Rupel's trial arrived. The courtroom was jammed. The judges sat on the bench looking solemn and formidable.

"Guilty or not guilty?" queried the judge, in a voice that was full of emotion.

Eminent counsel had been engaged to defend the prisoner, and they advised him to plead not guilty. William listened attentively to all they said, and then arose and stepped toward the bar. Every one in the courtroom was silent. At last in a firm voice Rupel said, as he looked at his judges:

"I am guilty." A murmur of surprise came from his counsel and the spectators. Then they were quiet again as the former great statesman continued:

"A few years ago the penalty for such a crime as mine was death; now it is imprisonment for life. There is no use trying to deny it; I have committed a crime and therefore must be punished according to the laws of my country. And the people of England little dreamed that when I worked so hard for the passage of the 'Forgery Bill' that I was working to save myself from death. God saw fit to expose my crime, and now I must bow to His decree and be punished."

William Rupel took his seat behind the rail around the prisoners' box.

His counsel now arose and protested against their client's plea, and tried to substitute that of not guilty. The judges were willing to entertain the plea of not guilty, but William Rupel was firm.

"No," he said, "I am guilty, and there is no use for me to add perjury on top of the crime."

"Then we can do nothing for you," said his counsel.

The judge arose and stepped to the side of his desk. His associates arose also, and with bowed heads waited for him to speak. His voice was so overcome with emotion that for some minutes he could hardly speak. He had been an intimate friend of William Rupel, and now it seemed terrible for him to pass sentence upon a man who had been so famous and done so much good. When the silence finally became monotonous, the judge said:

"It gives me great pain to pass this sentence, but then it is my duty, and I must do it. William Rupel—I—now sentence—you to—prison—for—life—for—the—crime—of forgery!"

A silence fell upon the court.

The prisoner was removed, and the people departed. Every one expressed the deepest regret, and steps were immediately taken to try and have the prisoner pardoned.

The greatest influence was brought to bear upon the queen, but she would not look into the case, and so William Rupel, the illegitimate son of Sir Robert Rupel, was compelled to go to Portland Jail, where at last accounts he was still confined, being engaged in keeping the books of the prison.

After a time people stopped talking about the statesman, and his name soon passed from the minds of his countrymen.

Rev. Frank Hoffman and Lady Jane Austen were sitting in Lady Cathcart's parlor the evening after William Rupel was removed to Portland, when a servant entered and announced Phil Roach, the detective.

Mr. Hoffman greeted the detective very coolly, because he considered that Roach might have allowed his friend to live in peace at Baden-Baden.

"Mr. Hoffman," said Phil, when he took a seat on the sofa opposite to Lady Jane and the curate, "no doubt you consider me cruel, but then if you will look at it the same as William Rupel does, you will see that I simply did my duty."

"No doubt," answered the curate.

"But we will let this rest. I have come here to tell you something that interests Lady Jane Austen."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Hoffman, who now changed his demeanor somewhat toward the detective.

"It is this," said Roach: "Lady Jane Austen is now the only heir to the Rupel estates. Clarence Rupel and Lady Anne knew of this, and this was the reason why they wanted to put Lady Jane out of the way."

"How did you find this out?" asked Mr. Hoffman, in great surprise.

"During my investigations I discovered that Lady Jane's great-grandmother was a Rupel, and then that there was no other legitimate heir to the estates but her."

Mr. Hoffman and Lady Jane now thanked the detective, apologized for their conduct toward him, and promised him a handsome present.

When Roach left Lady Cathcart's parlor, Mr. Hoffman turned to Lady Jane, and said, in a tremulous voice:

"Jane, now that you have come into possession of such vast estates, it will be cruel for me to hold you to your engagement. You are now one of the wealthiest women in England, and you should make a brilliant marriage."

"Frank, you must not think of this," said Lady Jane, as she came up to Mr. Hoffman, and placed her arms around his neck. "Do you suppose that for all the wealth in England I would prove false to you?"

The curate clasped her to his bosom, showered kisses upon her upturned lips, and murmured:

"Jane, you are my own true love. How can I ever repay you for this sacrifice?"

"By never mentioning it to me again," Lady Jane answered, as she rested her head upon her lover's shoulder.

A month after this Rev. Frank Hoffman and Lady Jane Austen were made man and wife. They went abroad, and after visiting all the noted places on the continent they returned and took up their residence at Croyden Abbey.

Soon after this Mr. Hoffman was made a bishop. He has never forgotten his friend William Rupel, and on visiting days either he or Lady Jane visit Portland and spend some time with the prisoner, for whose pardon they have been waiting for years without any sign of success.

Phil Roach is still at Scotland Yard. Lady Jane and Mr. Hoffman kept their promise and gave him a large sum of money, with which he purchased a villa on the outskirts of London.

(The end)

A new Detective Serial will begin in our Next Number.

CURRENT NEWS

HIGH WATERFALL IN JAPAN

The loftiest waterfall known in Japan has been recently discovered amid the fastnesses of the mountains in the Shiratoshiro region, Fukui prefecture. In height this fall is 2,200 feet, but its breadth is only two meters.

The water has a perpendicular drop. A cedar tree eighty feet tall stands near the edge of the precipice. The surrounding scenery is of weird beauty.

SHOT OWL STEALING HEN

When a big-horned owl, eighteen inches tall, was flying off with a hen, S. J. Petitt shot the bird at his farm near Orchards, Wash., recently. The owl measured four feet six inches from tip to tip. Mr. Pettit had missed several chickens and was at a loss to know where they went and was pleased when he found he had the culprit. The owl will be mounted.

FIGHTS MAD COUGAR

In a desperate fight with a mad cougar, with his bare hands as his only weapons, J. Donovan of Bend, Ore., was the victor, according to his story as he was undergoing the Pasteur treatment at a doctor's office at Portland, Ore. Donovan says he was working in a stony field on his ranch, when the beast sprang upon him from behind a rock where it had lurked. With its 100 pounds weight it bore Donovan to the ground. He managed to get a firm grip on the animal's throat, and although scratched and bitten he slowly choked the breath from the beast.

YAQUI INDIANS DEPORTED

Mexico City papers received in El Paso, Tex., tell of the arrival there of 1,000 Yaqui Indian men, women and children, en route to the henequin fields of the State of Yucatan. This shipment was the first of a total of 10,000 from the State of Sonora, where they are being rounded up and deported to the south by General Plutario Elias Calles, military commander. The Indians have been on the warpath for three months.

This was said to be the first deportation of Yaquis since the days of Diaz.

NOT A WORD SPOKEN AT THIS WEDDING

A marriage ceremony, without a word spoken, took place the other afternoon at Loyola College, Baltimore, Md. The sign language was used by the priest, bride, bridegroom, bridesmaid and best man.

Miss Grace E. Wilhelm was the bride, and George A. Koenig was the bridegroom. William Dilworth, known in sporting circles as "Dummie Decker," was best man, and his wife, Mrs. Dilworth, was the matron of honor. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. M. A. Partell, of Loyola College, whose work is largely among the deaf.

DIG UP FOSSIL

A fossil classified by Prof. R. B. Dunlavy of Southwestern College, Winfield, Kan., as a Permenian vertebrate has been excavated from the bank of the Walnut River near here, by a party of Southwestern students. It was found below the limestone layer in the Permenian rock and has the characteristics of a reptilian fish.

The head of the fossil is about eight inches long and five inches wide. The teeth are about half an inch in diameter.

It is said that only one other fossil of this kind has been found in Kansas. The specimen found by the students is being preserved at Southwestern College.

THE "BABIES" OF THE COCOANUT

The cocoanut family is a large one and there are many babies in it. The babies are a species all by themselves, though closely related to the giant seventy-pound specimens called coco-de-mer. They are full grown, although only as large as a good-sized hickory nut, says *Popular Science Monthly*. Although they taste exactly like the ordinary cocoanut, they are too small to be of any value commercially, and rot on the ground by the ton in the tropics.

A FREAK DOLLAR

Charles Barr of Greenfield, Ind., has a silver dollar, both sides of which are the same. The dollar was paid him when he drew $2,000 from an Anderson bank twenty-two years ago to pay off men working on a street contract. The piece was not noticed until one of the workmen presented it at an Anderson store and it was refused. He returned it to Barr, who has carried it since. The eagle is shown on both sides of the dollar, and therefore it has no date. The money is genuine. Mr. Barr never has found any person who has seen a similar dollar.

CHASED BY PHANTOM AIRSHIP

An account of a mirage in the clouds is given in a letter from a British flying corps officer on the western front. He says: "I had often wondered what it would feel like to see a machine coming straight for me, and to know that a collision was inevitable. I had the experience this afternoon, only the collision did not take place. I was on patrol with five other machines over the lines, and had just gone into a cloud bank. Just before going in I saw the plane on my right turning to cross in front of me. Suddenly I saw a machine of the same type as mine appear out of the cloud, about 50 feet away, making straight for me. Instinctively I jammed my nose hard down and went as near a nose drive as possible. The other airplane did the same. I turned; the other turned to me. I was in a cold perspiration all over by this time, so I thought: 'Here goes; if I am going to crash, it might as well be complete.' So straight for it I went. We got closer and closer, and biff! my machine and its mirage in the clouds met.

"It seemed like a hideous nightmare, and I can still see that machine doing its utmost to crash into me. I think I can say I have had the full horrors of a collision in the air without its actually taking place. I finally got out of the clouds and had not the faintest idea where I was until a shell reminded me that I was a little too low over the German line

TWO HAWAIIAN VOLCANOES SHOW SIGNS OF ACTIVITY

Kilauea, the most active volcano in the world, is exploding spurs of lava sixty feet in the air, and only fifteen feet remains before the boiling mass streams over the cone. Fears are expressed that serious earth shocks will result.

Mauna Loa, westward from Kilauea, also has been seen to issue fumes.

FROZEN FISH RESTORED TO LIFE

Occasionally a "fish" story gets into circulation which has such a scientific flavor that it challenges the credulity of even the very well informed. To this class, says *Popular Science Monthly*, belongs the story of the resurrection of a fish called the "Chindagaka," which, it is reported, will come to life again after having lain frozen solid in the ice for months.

According to the authorities connected with the United States Fish Commission, the Chindagaka is a newcomer not only into the field of fish literature but also into the lists of known species. None of the experts on the Commision had heard of it before. They declare that when a fish is entirely frozen, life is extinct; though it is possible for a fish to appear to be frozen when its flesh is only stiffened from the cold. The blood is still uncongealed, therefore the fish is still alive and will, of course, revive gradually when placed in water of the proper temperature.

Even this will happen only to a fish which has been caught through a hole in the ice and left lying exposed on the ice surface until it has become stiffened from the cold.

SPEAKS AFTER 35 YEARS

Able to speak and hear perfectly after thirty-five years as a deaf mute, Joseph Gertzolowitz, a cutter, was removed from Ward's Island to the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrants' Aid Society Building, 229 East Broadway, to await word from his only relative, a sister, Mrs. Lottie Cohen. For nealy fifteen months Gertzolowitz had been held in the Manhattan Hospital for the Insane, where he had been taken because, unable to make himself understood, hias frantic gesticulations had caused physicians to believe his mind was affected.

The cutter's affliction dated back to his seventh year in Kovna, Russia, and the amount of money which his parents spent to cure him compelled them to come here to recoup. What became of them Gertzolowitz could not say. The only thing he remembered was living with his sister somewhere in Monroe street. About a year and a half ago Gertzolowitz wandered off from his home and could not tell where he lived. Finally his excitement resulted in his commitment to the institution for the insane. Recently he recovered his lost faculties, and, after Doctor Pholson of Ward's Island had examined him, he asked the Hebrew relief organization to try to find his relatives.

THE SHRINKING DOLLAR VALUE.

If a silver dollar and a fifty-cent piece be laid side by side they will show at a glance the effect of the war upon the cost of living. The purchasing power of the dollar in June, 1914, has decreased to little more than fifty cents.

War has brought prosperity to some industries, but to those workers whose incomes have not increased it has added a steadily increasing burden. Taking the average prices of fifty staple articles of food as a basis, Arthur L. Lee, a New York hotel accountant, shows that on June 15, 1915, the great conflict had cut nearly ten cents from the value of a dollar, sixteen cents the following year, thirty-five by June, 1917, and fifty cents by January 1, 1918.

The added burden rests not only upon every American home, but upon those in the countries of our Allies and in neutral lands. Mr. Lee sees no hope for better things until a just peace is concluded, until which time we must practise every economy. He adds one cheering thought—the advanced cost of living falls also upon the pacifists and pro-Germans, whom he considers usually the same thing, and whether they will or not, they, too, must bear their share of the burden and help pay the war taxes.

CURIOUS EYES

M. W. Strickland of Singapore recently had a strange experience while sitting in a garden at Buitenzorg, Java. Watching a captive spider remarkable for the possession of a pair of eyes which glow like gig lamps amid a cluster of smaller eyes, he was amazed to note that the "gig lamps" slowly changed in color from brown to grass green and back again to brown. Further, as if to increase his astonishment, the creature proceeded to change the color of its eyes alternately, thereby exercising a most uncanny fascination over the mere man. There was something so diabolically deliberate in these changes as to make it seem that the actor took a genuine pride in the performance. The offer of a substantial reward for other specimens of the same species proved unavailing, but it was instrumental in bringing to light a second species, of a grass green color slashed with yellow, which proved in every way as great an expert in the gentle art of ogling as its more somberly colored relative. So far as is known this change in the color of the eyes occurs only in certain species of ducks, and then only under the influence of fear, while in the spider it would appear almost to be voluntary.

OUR MINERS MAY SERVE IN FRANCE

No one can say when the fighting to drive the Germans out of the coal fields of Northern France, of which Lens is the most productive center, will be crowned with success, but it is expected that American mining engineers will follow close on the heels of the victorious Allies, even though our troops are not on that fighting front. The control of the region by armies of the Kaiser shuts off French industry from most of its domestic supply of coal.

It is certain that the Germans will completely wreck the fine, modern equipment of the mines before they are compelled to retreat, so an arrangement is now being made between our own and the French Governments to have American engineers begin the work of restoration the moment that the advance of the Allied lines makes it possible. Regiments of skilled miners, either volunteers or men included in the drafts, will follow closely, commanded by experienced mining men, many of whom have already offered their services. A group of New York capitalists has offered to pay the cost of the venture.

Coal operators argue that miners cannot be spared, but only a comparatively small number of the 750,000 in this country would be taken. The object would be to assist, not to take the places of the French miners, and the advantage to us would be direct. Every additional ton of coal mined in France reduces the quantity which we must send abroad for our Allies, and also the vast amount which England must ship across the Channel. This means that ships—the determining factor in the winning of the war—could be released for the transport of other vital supplies.

TURKISH SULTAN A MODEST MAN

The Sultan of Turkey hasn't a bad opinion of himself. This is proved by the titles under which he is mentioned in a recent army order to his troops in Mesopotamia. According to London *Tit-Bits*, here is the way it began:

"The Finest Pearl of the Age and the esteemed Center of the Universe, at whose grand portals stand the camels of justice and mercy, and to whom the eyes of the kings and peoples in the West have been drawn, the rulers there finding an example of political prowess and the classes a model of mercy and kindness; our Lord and Master the Sultan of the two Shares and the High King of the two Seas, the Crown of the Ages and the Pride of all Countries, the greatest of all Khalifs, the Shadow of God on Earth, the successor of the Apostle, of the Lord of the Universe, the Victorious Conqueror Al-Ghari. May God protect his kingdom, and place his glory above the sun and the moon, and may the Lord supply all the world with the goodness which proceeds from the Holy Majesty's good intentions."

It is evident that the modesty of the "Finest Pearl of the Age" forbade him giving the full list of his array of titles, but this mighty potentate can also claim to be the "Incarnation of Mahomet," the "Dispeller of all Evil," and the "Divine of Divines."

FIRST SCHOOL FOR BAD BOYS

In the little city of Mottray, France, the first school for bad boys was founded eighty years ago. A lawyer named Metz was responsible for the school. He had an idea that bad boys, is given the proper environment and opportunity, might be transformed into good boys. Before that time it had been believed that when boys were bad it was because of original sin, and that flogging or more brutal punishment was the only cure. Humanitarians had arisen from time to time and suggested that kind treatment might work a cure in the case of juvenile delinquency, but such theories were denounced as ungodly and irreligious.

The reform school idea found speedy acceptance in France, after the success of the Mottray institution in dealing with supposedly incorrigibles, and quickly spread to other European nations and to the United States and Canada. To-day every country has its reform schools, junior republics, juvenile courts and other machinery for dealing with youthful delinquents, Reformatory schools admit, as a rule, only youths who have been guilty of crimes which, when committed by adults. are punishable by imprisonment. The juvenile courts have since been established to bring about the reformation of youthful offenders without recourse to the reform school and have been highly successful.

CHINA NOW SENDING US MANY FEATHERS

Although the export of feathers (duck, fowl, etc.) from China as a whole has decreased somewhat during the past few years owing to the elimination of the German buyers, says a Shanghai newspaper, the export of feathers from China to America has shown a great increase since the outbreak of the war, America having stepped in to take almost the identical quantity that Germany had previously taken.

About a million dollars' worth of feathers are exported from Chinese ports yearly, America last year taking about one-third of this quantity, whereas two years previously the American purchases were inconsequential. The customs figures show that Kowloon (opposite Hongkong) is the principal port of export for feathers from China, but as the feathers from Kowloon are merely transferred to the British possession of Hongkong, a few miles distant, there is no means of knowing what the ultimate destination was of the very considerable quantity of more than $200,000 worth exported from the City of the Nine Dragons (which is what the Chinese name means).

Shanghai itself produces over $100,000 worth of feathers for export, while the Yangtse port of Wuhu furnishes not far short of $200,000 worth. The buyer of feathers in China must use extreme care or else he will find what has been sold him ostensibly as duck feathers will contain feathers from chickens or other fowls whose feathers are of an inferior quality.

INDIAN HATCHET IN TREE

As the saw in Cole Brothers mill on the Middleburgh Road, Cooperstown, N. Y., was tearing its way through a large tree it struck something that resisted its progress and refused to permit its advance. From the twang of the saw as it struck the impediment the men knew it had struck something quite as hard as steel and examination showed that the temper of the steel had been destroyed.

What these men cut from the tree is now believed to be the head of an Indian tomahawk or hatchet which was embedded here in its youth and as the tree grew the hatchet's handle rotted and the flint became enclosed. This belief is founded on the history of the valley which tells of Indian fighting the settlers and camping in its borders.

In explaining how the hatchet became fastened in the tree, it is said that possibly it was thrown in a contest of skill. Other persons say that it went toward a human mark and missing struck the tree. Fancy even goes so far as to say it might have been hurled toward an unfortunate settler bound to the stake. If the belief it belonged to an Indian becomes well founded it is probable the hatchet head will find a home with its fellows in the Old Stone Fort.

HOW TO ADDRESS CERTAIN KINGS

The youthful Shah of Persia has an amazing array of titles, ranging from Shah-in-Shah (King of Kings) to such poetical attributes as "The Rose of Delight," "The Branch of Honor" and "The Mirror of Virtue"; while His Majesty of Arracan used to be proclaimed as "Emperor of Arracan, Possessor of the White Elephant and the two earings, and in virtue of this possession legitimate Heir of Pegu and Brama; Lord of the Twelve Kings who place their heads under his feet."

Somewhere in the wilds or Afghanistan there is an ameer who boasts of as many high dignities as there are days in the year, among them being: "The Sovereign of the Universe, whom God created to be as accomplished as the moon at her plenitude; whose eye glitters like the northern star; a king as spiritual as a ball is round, who, when he rises, shades all of his people, and from under whose feet a sweet odor is wafted." But perhaps the most remarkable title any monarch was ever proud to own was borne by the King of Monomotapa, whose praises were sung by his court poets and musicians as "Lord of the Sun and Moon, Great Magician and Great Thief."

Another striking example of royal dignity is that of the former Emporer of China, whose recent coup d'état ended in such failure. He was hailed by his subjects as "The protector of religion, whose fame is infinite and of surpassing excellence, exceeding the moon, the unexpanded jessamine buds and the stars, whose feet are as fragrant to the noses of other kings as flowers to bees, most noble patron and God by custom."

WOMEN MORE CRUEL THAN MEN?

An official of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals complains of "cruel women who come to the meetings of the society wearing aigrettes of the plumage of birds that are obtained by the slaughter of the mother-bird and the starvation of the brood."

On this solid foundation of fact one might feel secure in concluding that women are, as a sex, more cruel than men.

All eyes have seen the woman with the bird on her hat. She wears this particular badge of her cruelty where it cannot escape being seen and for the sole reason that it may be seen.

But is it not unfair to condemn women as utterly cruel because of this one fault? After all, it is not so much a fault as a frailty. Women's vanity is an overpowering passion, and if they must feed it upon the plumage of slaughtered birds, are they any worse than men who glut their greed upon the fruits of others' life-crushing toil?

Cruelty is really a very infrequent vice among women. Even bird-wearing is far from being universal among them. It is impossible not to remember that the whole structure of the movement on behalf of humanity to all creatures, which has reached greater proportions in this country than in any other, is founded in the first instance on the tender-heartedness of American women. It would be interesting to know how far the S. P. C. A. movement would ever have progressed but for the inspiration and enthusiasm that have come from women.

"MOVIES" IN LONDON 200 YEARS AGO

Although our ancestors of two centuries ago would doubtless be overcome with awe and wonder if they could be permitted to witness a modern picture show, we of today err in concluding that the "movies" were wholly unknown to them. The first known reference to motion pictures as a form of popular entertainment is in the *London Tattler* of December 27, 1709, containing an advertisement of a movie theater in the Strand. The announcement, headed "Never Seen Before," invites the public to witness "a picture, finely drawn, by an extraordinary Master, which has many curious and wonderfully pleasing and surprising motions in it, all natural."

These early and crude "movies" were very popular for a time, but their vogue was short. The genesis of the moving picture goes back further than two centuries ago. Edison's kinetograph, an apparatus for taking pictures of moving objects, is a development, through the photographic camera, of the camera obscura invented by Roger Bacon, the father of English science, in the thirteenth century. Edison's kinetoscope, the apparatus for the exhibition of the pictures taken by the kinetograph, had its germ in the magic lantern, the invention of which is also ascribed to Bacon. The inventor of the camera obscura and many other epochal inventions was a friar, but he was accused of heresy and the practice of black magic because of his scientific work and was long confined in prison. The magic lantern was considered a device of the devil, and it passed out of use and was re-invented by Athanasius Kircher in the seventeenth century.

The first movies were magic lantern exhibitions of pictures, portions of which were movable. Much ingenuity was displayed by the artists who produced these pictures, but they were necessarily very limited in scope.

THE GREATEST MOHAMMEDAN UNIVERSITY

"In the great Mosque el Azshar at Cairo is the most famous university of the Mohammedan world, founded in the Tenth Century. It has 300 professors and 10,000 students. The teaching has changed but little in the thousand years that the university has been in existence," writes Caroline Bird Parker in St. Nicholas. "Contrary to our custom the boys are provided with board and lodging and many of them have money given them as alms. They stay from four to six years. There are 140 pillars in the mosque, and at every one you will find a professor and his class. The other 160 professors take their classes where they can find room to sit. Furniture is not an essential for the Arab, who really prefers to sit on the floor. It is a strange sight—these thousands of men and boys sitting on the ground, swaying back and forth, all apparently in eager pursuit of knowledge. If a boy is tired or sleepy, he simply tumbles over and takes a nap, and no one pays the slightest attention to him. When he wakens he sits up and starts in again with his sing-song study.

"Very often only the teacher has a book. If the boys have anything it is detached leaves. They write industrially on slates made from the tin of good American Standard Oil cans or of yellow wood.

"The pens are whittled from reeds, and the ink is furnished by the teachers. It is rich, black and thick, made from lampblack, vinegar, red ochre, yellow arsenic and camphor, in mysterious proportions. A famous recipe for ink is a family secret and treasure.

"When a boy has finished the reading of the whole of the Koran for the first time he is graduated from the primary school and is given a holiday in honor of the occasion. He is dressed in his best, perhaps mounted on horseback, visits the neighbors, receiving gifts and sweetmeats and brings back a handsome present to his tutor."

MR. McADOO URGES SOUTHERN FARMERS TO RAISE ENOUGH FOOD FOR THEIR OWN SECTION

Secretary McAdoo authorizes the following statement:

One of the great tasks confronting the American people is that of improving and making thoroughly efficient their railroad transportation system. The people of the South, and especially the farmers, are in the habit of using the transportation system of the country to a degree that is highly uneconomic and unnecessary, for the purpose of transporting food and feed from other parts of the United States, because they do not produce enough foodstuffs and feedstuffs for themselves. I wish to urge upon the people of the South, and specially the farmers, to do everything possible during the next year to relieve the strain on the railroad agencies of the Nation by producing their own food and feed crops. The South can, if it will, feed itself and produce the rations both in roughage and grain for its own livestock.

The best farmers of the South recognized the fact that it pays as a matter of good farming to produce on each farm the hay and grain for the live stock, all the garden products, fruit, and poultry products which are needed by the farm, and if possible a surplus of all these for sale in the immediate vicinity.

It is not desired nor do I suggest that the growing of cotton should be discouraged. Every Southern farmer should raise all the cotton that he can well cultivate, since cotton constitutes the best cash crop of most of the South, but he should grow the hay and grain to feed his draft animals. He should produce his own milk, butter, eggs, poultry, fruit, and vegetables, and every city and town of the South be, to the largest possible extent, supplied with these commodities by the farmers of the South. It is not only good agricultural practice, but it becomes in this exigency a patriotic duty.

If the South can feed itself it will release from unnecessary service in the South a vast number of freight cars and engines and will help win the war.

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